

THE

VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

PART VII.

DO you remember, Madam, that it was so long before you received the Second Part of my history, that you began to suspect I did not intend to send it: the Third was so late, that you thought you should receive no more; and though the Fourth was more expeditious, yet you charged me with laziness; the Fifth preceded your expectations; the Sixth followed it so close, that it surprized you; and here you see the Seventh. Pray, tell me what opinion this gives you of my character? Am I idle? my diligence proves the contrary. Am I diligent? my former sloth insists upon the negative. What am I, then, in this respect? I am what, in general, we all of us are: I am what fancy and humour render me; sometimes worthy of praise, and sometimes of blame. Is not all the world the same? I have confided in the virtues of mankind; and, from their vices, have imagined what would be their actions; but have been often deceived. I have had reason to think they would shew their generosity, and they appeared mean-spirited and covetous: I have thought them covetous, and they proved generous. Formerly, you could not endure the sight of a book; and now you are ever reading: perhaps, in a short time, you will leave your books; and I relapse into my former indolence.

However, let me go on with my history; we are at the ill-natured manner in which my enemy interrupted Mr. De ****; to which I returned—

‘ You are quite mistaken, indeed, Madam,’ said I: ‘ you may make yourself entirely easy; for you have no reason to be under any apprehensions. It is true, Mrs. De Valville has the goodness to be a mother to me;’ (here I could not smother my sighs) ‘ and I am obliged, unless I would be the most ungrateful creature upon earth, to love and respect her as much as if she was the mother who brought me into life: I owe her the same dutiful submission, the same reverence, and, I think sometimes, even much more; for, though I am not her child, she treats me as if I was. I am not related to her; and she might, therefore, without fear of censure, have left me in the distress in which she found me involved; or, however, have satisfied herself with shewing a common compassion for me, and letting me know that I had some share in her esteem: but her goodness, her care, her tenderness, are inexpressible. I can neither think of them, nor look upon her, without melting into tears of love and gratitude; without telling her that my heart, my life, are hers; without wishing I had a thousand lives, which, if she stood in need of them, I would freely give to save hers: and, I thank God, I have now an opportunity of making this publick declaration; it is an infinite satisfaction, the greatest I could ever experience, to be able thus to give a loose to the transports of my affection, and all that zeal and admiration with which my heart overflows.—’

flows.—Yes, Madam, I am only a stranger, an unhappy orphan, whom God, the Universal Parent, seemed to have abandoned to all imaginable evils: but now, though I should be told I was the daughter of a queen, and was invited to accept of a crown, I would refuse it, rather than be separated from her; I could not live without her.—I love none with such a tender affection as I do you, my dearest friend: you are the only tie I have on earth; you, who have received me so charitably; you, whose generosity leads you to love me, notwithstanding the efforts of those who would make you blush for it, and though the world despises me.'

Here, through the tears I was shedding, I took notice that several of the company turned away their heads to wipe their eyes. The minister looked downwards, and endeavoured to conceal his being touched: Valville stood as if immovable, regarding me with a passionate air, as if I took up all his thoughts; and my mother let her tears freely flow, without endeavouring to conceal them. 'Thou hast not said all, Marianne,' said she, giving me her hand without any ceremony, which I freely kissed: 'proceed; but say no more of me, since it moves thee so much.'

'You told me, Sir,' resumed I, 'that you would remove me far from Paris, if I refused to marry this young man: do so, if you please. But I have one thing to say, which ought to free you from your apprehensions of my marrying Mr. De Valville; and that is, I give you my word it will never be concluded. It is true, Sir, I did not assure you of it before Mrs. De Valville arrived; but I hope you will excuse me when I tell you, that I did not think it would be generous in me to renounce Mr. De Valville while menaces were used to compel me to it. I thought it would be a piece of baseness and ingratitude to shew such want of resolution, after he has had the courage to love me with such sincerity and tenderness, in spite of the discouraging situation in which he found me, and which has only served to increase his affection. This, Sir, was my motive. If I had promised that I would see him no more, he would have had reason to believe that

I had not the least esteem for him, since I should have refused to have been persecuted for his sake: on the contrary, my intention was, that he should know his generous heart had conquered mine; and I am not ashamed to confess it. This, perhaps, may be the last time I shall see him; and I therefore take hold of it to acquit myself of what I owe him; and to let both Mrs. De Valville and him know, that, what fear and menaces could not compel me to, I do now out of gratitude to them both.—No, Madam—no, Mr. De Valville—you are both too dear to me: I can never be the cause of the reproaches you would suffer; nor of the shame, they say, you might draw upon yourselves. The world disdains, it rejects me; and, as we shall never be able to correct it's prejudices, we must humour them. You think it is unjust; but it does not become me to think so too; I should be too much a gainer by that: I will only say you are generous; and I will never abuse the affection that makes you scorn it's customs. The blame that would fall upon you, would cost me my life; and, if I did not prevent it, I should be unworthy of your goodness. Alas! how greatly would you then think yourself deceived! You would then reflect, that I had not the disinterested character your affection now flatters me with: this is the only way to preserve your esteem. Mr. De Climal has been so kind as to leave me something to live upon; and that is sufficient for a girl, who, in quitting you, leaves all that is dear behind her; all the charms, all the sweets, of life: and, after this, will have nothing more worthy her care; no other loss worth regretting. I will immure myself in a convent for life; where I shall see nobody but my dear mamma, whom I beg not to deprive me of her company too suddenly, and that she would be so kind as to see me sometimes.—These, Sir, are my designs; and, if you suspect my sincerity, send me far from hence according to your first intentions.'

A torrent of tears concluded my discourse. Valville, pale and dejected, seemed unable to support his trouble: his mother was going to answer me; when the minister prevented her, by turning

turning suddenly to her relations. 'Ladies,' said he to them, with a lively air of satisfaction, 'what answer can be made to what we have heard? For my part, I can make none; and I declare, that I will interfere no more in it. Would you have me oppose the esteem Mrs. De Valville has for virtue, which we all ought to approve? Would you have me endeavour to strip it of its charms? You and I have no such thoughts; and therefore authority has nothing to do here.' And then turning to his lady's nurse's son—'Retire, Villot,' said he. 'Madam, I return you your daughter, and all the power you have over her: you have been to her a mother; nor could she have found a better; she is worthy of all your care and tenderness.—Go, Miss; forget what is passed, and let it be as if it had never been: let not your being ignorant of your birth disturb you; though the nobleness of your extraction is unknown, that of your mind is beyond all dispute; and, were I to chuse, I should prefer the latter.'

Here he was going to withdraw; but, seized with a sudden transport, I threw myself at his feet with a rapidity more eloquent and more expressive than all I could have said; nor could I utter a word to thank him for the gracious sentiments he had expressed in my favour: he raised me immediately, with an air that shewed that this action agreeably surprized and moved him.

'Rise, my lovely child!' said he; 'you owe me nothing; I only do you justice.' Then addressing himself to the ladies—'She will not be satisfied till she makes us all love her,' added he; 'and I do not see how we can avoid it.—Take her with you, Madam,' said he to my mamma; 'carry her back: you must take care of your son, if he loves her; for, after the amiable qualities we have seen in her, I would neither answer for him nor any one else. You must, after all, do as you think proper; for it is your own business.'—'Without doubt,' said Mrs. De ****: 'I am very sorry we have given Mrs. De Valville this trouble to-day; I did all I could to prevent it.'—'Well, ladies,' returned the haughty kinswoman, 'I think you have nothing to do now but to congratulate your cousin: pray embrace

her before-hand; you will run no risque in it; for she will soon be one of the family. As for me, I hope you will dispense with it, notwithstanding the incomparable nobleness of her heart: I am not, indeed, apt to be wrought upon by such romantic virtues.—Adieu, my little adventurer! you are now, it seems, only a lady of quality, they say: but you will not stop here; we shall be very happy if you do not persuade them to believe, by-and-by, that you are a princess.' Instead of answering her, I advanced towards my mother, took hold of her hand, kissed it, and bathed it with tears of joy. The ill-natured relation arose up in a rage; and, as she was going, asked the two ladies if they would not follow her. On this they arose, more out of complaisance to her than enmity to me: it was very visible that they did not at all approve of her behaviour; and only went for fear of disobliging her. One of them, as she was going, whispered to Mrs. De Valville—'She brought us with her,' said she; 'and would never forgive us if we staid behind her.' Valville, who was now come to himself, could not look at her without laughing: the ill success of her enterprise had disarmed his resentment. 'Does your coach wait for you, Madam?' said he; 'or shall we set you down?'—'Let me alone,' cried she; 'your satisfaction excites my pity.' She then saluted Mrs. De ****; and, without casting her eyes on Mrs. De Valville, went out with the above-mentioned ladies.

She was no sooner gone, than the rest of the company assembled about me; and every one paid me some obliging compliment. 'I cannot help reproaching myself,' said the minister's lady to my mamma, 'for entering into their intrigue; I am vexed that they were able to tease me into it: we could not not be more in the wrong than we were.—Is it not true, ladies!'—'Pray, do not mention it any more; we are quite ashamed of it!' replied they. 'How amiable she is! we have nothing so sweetly charming in all Paris!'—'Nor, perhaps, so truly valuable!' returned Mrs. De ****; 'I cannot tell how to express the inquietude I was in during the whole dialogue: and I confess I never was better

‘better pleased with Mr. De ****; for what he has just said is extremely equitable.’—‘I confess,’ said one of the gentlemen I had seen in the antichamber, ‘that I should have been in a great deal of pain if we had had any other judge but Mr. De ****; but his known justice would not suffer me to doubt a moment.’—‘For my part, I ought to beg his pardon for my fears,’ said Valville, who had hitherto listened with an air of inward satisfaction; at which they all smiled. It grew late; and my mamma took her leave of the minister’s lady, who embraced her in the most friendly manner, as if she intended to make her forget the assistance she had given to her enemies. She then did me the honour to embrace me too; a favour I received with all possible respect: and then we retired.

Scarce were we got into the antichamber, when we met Mrs. Catharine, who told us she was sent by the minister to wait upon us to the last convent, to desire them to return my cloaths, which they might not be willing to do if we went without her; unless Mrs. De Valville chose to defer going thither till another time. I did not know the way thither; besides, we were willing to conclude this affair directly, and therefore readily consented to her offer: the woman then followed us, and stepped into the coach. She had immediately lost that familiar behaviour she had before assumed; she seemed ashamed of the difference there was between us: every one has her own little pride; we were no longer companions; and that gave her a visible confusion. My joy was too exquisite to permit me to increase her disorder; and my triumph too sweet to suffer me to amuse myself with an ill-natured vanity: besides, I never had a heart capable of desiring to give another pain. Our conversation was very much reserved all the way, on account of her company. Something, however, that passed, made her tell us that Mrs. De Fare was the cause of this uproar; though she would not consent to join with the rest of the relations against me: she had not spoken with a design to prejudice me; but only to give herself the pleasure of being indiscreet, and revealing a thing she thought surprizing.

We soon arrived at the convent;

when I stepped down with the servant.

‘There is no occasion for me to appear,’ said my mamma; ‘and I think it sufficient for this young woman to go alone to demand your cloaths, without taking notice that we are here.’—‘Permit me to go, Madam,’ said I: ‘the kindness the abbess has expressed for me, requires that I should return her my thanks; which cannot be dispensed with without the appearance of ingratitude.’—‘You are in the right, child; I did not know that,’ returned she: ‘go; but make haste; tell her that I wait for you, and that I am so fatigued, that I cannot possibly come down; be as speedy as you can; you may come to see her another time.’ Not to be tedious, I entered the convent, and had my box returned to me. The nuns I had seen before, came to congratulate me on the success of my adventure: the abbess gave me fresh testimonies of the most sincere affection; she wished I would pass the rest of the day with her; but I could not comply with her request. ‘My mamma,’ said I, ‘is at the gate of your convent in her coach: she would have seen you if she had not been indisposed; she desires to be excused; and I am obliged to leave you.’—‘What! that tender mother whom I esteem so much?’ cried she. ‘Is she here? How glad should I be to see her! Go, Miss, and endeavour to persuade her to come in for a moment: if I could go out, I would wait upon her myself; but, if it is too late, tell her that I entreat her to do me the honour to come another time with you.’ Here she dismissed me; a servant carried my box of cloaths to the coach; and then we parted. My mamma told me I should dine with her, and not return to the other convent till the evening. ‘You must be a little longer in that house,’ said she, ‘if it be only on account of what has happened, and the uneasiness I have expressed there on your account.’ Meanwhile the coach was going on, and presently stopped in the court of Mrs. De Valville’s house; when she dismissed Mrs. De ****’s servant, walked in, and went up stairs.

The housekeeper who pulled off my stocking after my fall in returning from church, was no longer in the family; and the valet that had followed me in the

the hackney-coach to Mrs. Du Tour's, and brought me letters from Valville to the convent, I found was sick; so none of the servants knew who I was. The reason why I mention this is, while I was going up stairs with my mother, I had a reflection which exceedingly damped my joy: methought I was going to meet the above-mentioned housekeeper, and some of the footmen, who would infallibly know me again.

'Ha! the girl that was brought here who had hurt her foot,' thought I, they would say as soon as they saw me: 'the little linen-draper whom we took for a lady, who was carried to Mrs. Du Tour's.' This reflection mortified me; and I was afraid Valville, too, would be a little ashamed of me; though his love might make him regardless of their censure: but, happily, we were not exposed to this disagreeable scene; and I was at leisure to taste the pleasure of being with my mother, with as high a satisfaction as if I had been in my own house. 'Now, my dear,' said she, 'let me embrace thee without restraint: what a happy turn have our affairs taken! They suspect, they foresee, our designs; but do not disapprove them. The prime-minister has dispensed with your promise in returning you to me; and, thank Heaven! they will no longer be surprized at any thing that passes. Thou hast said, my dear, the tenderest things of me this morning; but, indeed, the uneasiness I have suffered on thy account makes me deserve them. Thou hast had a great deal of affliction too; is it not true? Didst thou reflect on what I should suffer? What were thy thoughts of thy mamma?'

She had seated herself in an easy-chair, and I sat by her, before she addressed me in this manner; when I gave myself over to a sudden transport of gratitude; I threw myself at her feet, kissed her hand, and lifted up my eyes swimming with tenderness and gratitude. 'My dear mother,' said I, 'Mr. De Valville is very dear to me; I have publicly acknowledged it: but that cannot prevent my telling you, that you are a thousand times more in my thoughts than he. It is my mother that has engrossed my soul; it was her affection; her goodness—what will she do! what will she not do! was all the language of

'my soul. I could not tell whether you would succeed in extricating me from my difficulties; but my most earnest wishes were, that my dear mother might not be afflicted at the thought of never seeing me more: I desired a hundred times more your tenderness than my own deliverance; and would rather have endured all than have been abandoned by you. I was full of these thoughts; so extremely agitated by them, that I could not help having some inquietude, which I now reproach myself with; but which lasted only for a moment. I thought of Mr. De Valville too; and found that I could not bear his forsaking me without being filled with an affliction too great to be expressed. But your affection, Madam, was my principal concern: your heart was still more necessary for the repose of mine, than his seemed to be. How kind has been your behaviour! How many obligations have you conferred upon me! And how sweet is the reflection of being dear to those we love!'

Mrs. De Valville listened to me with a smile of complacency. 'Arise, my dear,' said she at last: 'you make me forget that I am to blame you for your imprudence yesterday morning. I wonder you should let yourself be carried away by a woman entirely unknown to you; who came to fetch you without a note from me; and in a coach, too, which was not mine. Where were your wits, not to take notice of all this, especially after the suspicious visit you had received the day before from the skeleton you so well described? Did not her menaces intimate some design against you? And should not they have given you some distrust? You are a little giddy-brained creature! And, pray, while you stay in the convent, remember I would not have you leave it without that woman who is just gone out of the room,' (she spoke of her chambermaid) 'or a letter from me, when I do not go for you myself; do you mind?'

She had no sooner said this, than the dinner was brought in. Valville and I ate very little: my mamma took notice of it; and, with a smile, said—'Your joy, I fancy, takes away your stomachs.'—'Yes, Madam,' returned Valville, in the same agree-

able tone; 'we cannot give up our minds to many things at once.' When dinner was over, Mrs De Valville went into her own room, and we followed her. She then went into a small closet, and called me. I went to her. 'Give me thy hand,' said she to me; let us see if this ring will fit thee.' It was set with a very large and beautiful brilliant. 'I see a picture,' returned I, while she was trying it on, 'that I should value more than all the rings and jewels in the universe. Let us make an exchange, Madam,' added I: 'give me the picture, and I will return you the ring.'—'Have patience, child,' replied she; 'it shall be placed in your room, when you take possession of it; and that will be very soon. Where do you put your money, Marianne?' she rejoined: 'I think you have never a purse. Here is one neatly wrought,' said she, opening a drawer, and taking it out; 'make use of this.'—'I thank you, Madam,' returned I: 'but where must I put all the love, the respect, the gratitude, I have for you? Methinks I have more than can be contained in the narrow limits of my heart.' At this she smiled. Valville, who stood at the closet-door, was almost in raptures at hearing us talk to each other with this sweet and easy familiarity. 'Do you know, Madam, what we must do?' said he: 'let us put your daughter as soon as possible in possession of the room where you design to hang your picture; she will be more able to support the love she has for you, by being at hand to pour it when she pleases into your bosom.'—'That we are going to talk on presently,' returned Mrs. De Valville. 'Come, I will shew her the apartment which was mine while your father lived.'

We then went into a large antichamber, which I had seen before, in which there was a door opposite to that of the room we left, which opened into an apartment more spacious, and better furnished, than Mrs. De Valville's; and which, as well as hers, had the prospect of a fine garden. 'Well, my dear,' said she, smiling, 'how do you like this room? Will not your time pass sluggishly here, and make you regret your dear convent?' Tran-

ported with the most ravishing joy, I burst into tears; and, casting myself into her arms—'O dear Madam!' returned I in an affectionate tone, 'what charms are here for me! How delightful will it be to be always so near you!' I had scarce finished these words, when the porter's whistle informed us we were going to be troubled with company*. Mrs. De Valville was concerned at our being interrupted: she went to her apartment, and I followed her. Two ladies presently entered the room, who were entirely unknown to me, as I was to them; they, perhaps, thought me a relation of the family; and came to pay us one of those indifferent visits which consists in trifling away an idle hour, exchanging a few troublesome compliments, and then parting with a perfect indifference to each other. I shall only observe, that one of these two ladies talked very little, and had hardly any share in the conversation; she bridled her head; threw herself into a variety of different attitudes, and seemed wholly taken up with the charms of her dear incomparable person. It is true, she would have been very agreeable, if she had taken less pains to shew that she was so; but her vanity spoiled all, and stripped her of every natural beauty. There are many like her, who would appear extremely amiable, if they could but forget a little that they are so. Every action, every gesture, in this person, was only designed to make her be taken notice of, and to fill her beholders with admiration. This was the height of her ambition; and she seemed to live for nothing else. I believe she thought me pretty agreeable, because she only regarded me with a side-glance, full of an affected negligence; and hardly seemed to take notice that I was there, as if she would have it thought that she saw nothing in me but what was common, and below her regard. But one thing, however, betrayed her; her eyes were incessantly fixed on Valville, to observe which of the two he took most notice of, she or I; and shewed that she feared he would give me the preference.

The other lady was a good deal older; and was of a very grave, and yet very trifling disposition: she spoke, with the

* It is a custom in France, when persons of quality receive a visit, for the porter at the door to whistle to give the servants notice of it.

utmost seriousness and dignity, of a coach that was making for her; of an entertainment she had given; of a visit she had made; of a story she had from a certain marchioness; and then what an ingenious repartee she made the other day to Mrs. What-do-you-call-her, who, because she is rich, frequently forgets herself, and presumes not to make a proper difference between herself and women of a certain distinction. These, and a thousand other subjects, equally trifling and vain, were the topics of her conversation; during which we had several other visits no less tedious and impertinent; so that it was late before we could disengage ourselves from them; and it grew time for me to be carried back to my convent. My mamma hastened my going, because she was weary, and wanted to take some repose. We soon arrived at the convent, where we saw the abbess in her parlour; and my mother, in a few words, told her the conclusion of my adventure: and, after promising to come to see me again the next day, or the day after, she retired.

About twelve o'clock, the second day, Mrs. De Valville came to fetch me, according to her promise. I dined with her and Valville; and our marriage was the subject of the conversation. At the same time they told me that Valville was endeavouring to get a considerable post, which he would soon be invested with; that it would not be above three weeks at farthest before he obtained it; and that it was resolved we should be married as soon as that affair should be concluded. Nothing could be more positive. Valville discovered a mind full of joy; and my satisfaction was so excessive, that it took away my speech, and I could only express it by the grateful looks I cast at my mamma. 'This is not all,' said she; 'I intend to set out this evening, for eight or ten days, to my country-seat; where I shall rest myself from the fatigues I have undergone since my brother's death; and I design to take thee along with me, whilst my son goes to pass some time at Versailles, where his affairs call him.'—'What! ten or twelve days with you at once! How delightful is the thought!' returned I. 'But pray, Madam, do not change your mind.'—'Never fear it, child,' said she; and imme-

diately went into her closet to write to the abbess, that she would take me with her into the country: the letter was sent directly, and we set out two hours after.

Our journey was not very long, her seat being only three leagues from Paris. Valville stole away from Versailles two or three times to see us there; he did not take possession of his post so soon as he imagined; several unforeseen difficulties drew out this affair to a considerable length, though we expected it would be concluded every day: in short, we returned from the country; and my mamma placed me again in the convent, where she did not think I should stay above a week. However, a month passed away; in which time I went sometimes to dine with her, and sometimes with Mrs. Dorfin.

During this interval Valville appeared as tender and passionate as ever; but more gay than usual: in a word, his love seemed not to decrease, though he had more patience under the incidents that prolonged the conclusion of his affairs. The last time she carried me to my convent, Valville desired my mamma to let him attend us: his company had been that day very charming; methought he had never before loved me so much; nor expressed it in a more graceful, gallant, and lively manner. But so much the worse; his wit and gallantry were ill omens of my approaching uneasiness: his love, probably, was then less serious and violent; and he told me agreeable things only to disguise the sentiments of his heart, which began to lose its tenderness. However, he desired to attend us. Mrs. De Valville at first refused it; but afterwards consented to it. 'Well,' said she, 'I grant you leave, on condition that you stay in the coach, and do not shew yourself, while I step in for a moment to speak to the abbess.' From this piece of complaisance sprang the most poignant grief I think I had ever before experienced.

A lady of great distinction had brought her daughter, the evening before, to our convent; whom she intended to place there as a boarder, till she returned from a voyage she was going to make to England, to take possession of an estate that had fallen to her by the death of her mother. This

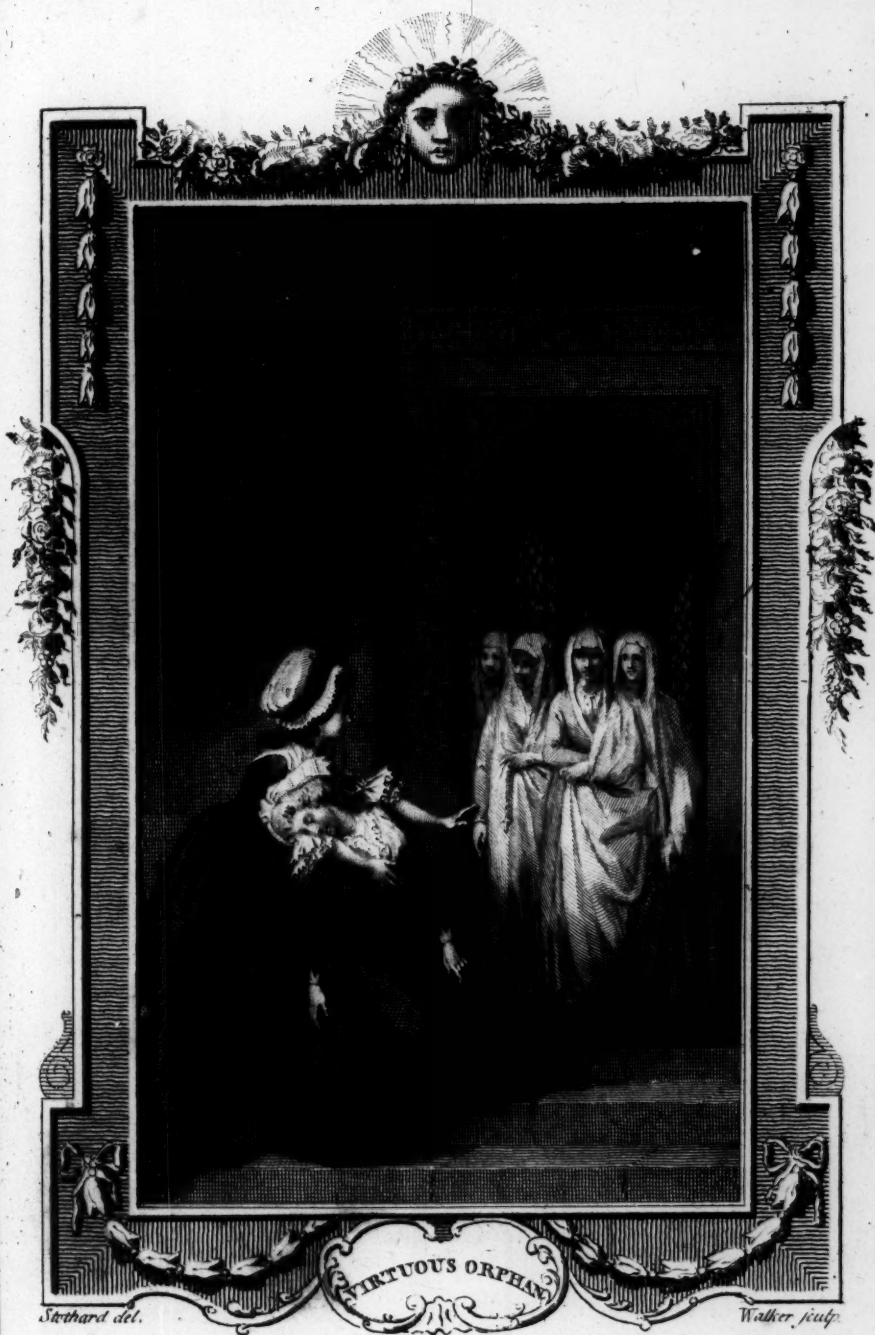
lady's husband died in France not long before: he was an English lord, whose zeal for his king had induced him, like many others, to leave his country. His widow, whose jointure had been her only resource, was going to sell it, together with her new estate, with a design to return to France, where she chose to reside. She had then made an agreement with the abbess, that her daughter should enter the next day into the convent, and had just brought her when we arrived; so that we found her coach in the court. We had but just stepped out of ours, when we saw those two ladies coming down from the parlour, where they had had a short conversation with the abbess. They had already opened the door of the convent to receive the young lady; who, casting her eyes into the convent, and on the nuns who waited to receive her; and then turning and casting a look upon her mother, who was all in tears; she suddenly fainted away between her arms. The mother, almost as weak as the daughter, would have been unable to prevent her falling down the last pair of stairs which they were going to descend, if a footman, who belonged to her, had not made haste to support them both.

This accident, of which Mrs. De Valville and I were spectators, made us cry out, and run to help them, and assist the footman, who had much ado to support them, and prevent their both falling down stairs together. 'Help, ladies! quick! I entreat you: I believe my daughter is dying!' cried the mother, all in tears, with the tone of a person in distress. The nuns, who were at the door of the convent, called the servant, who came running, and opened the door of a little room where she lay, and which happily was near the stair-case of the parlour. Here they endeavoured to carry the young lady: we entered it, with her mother, whom Mrs. De Valville supported, who we feared would follow her daughter.

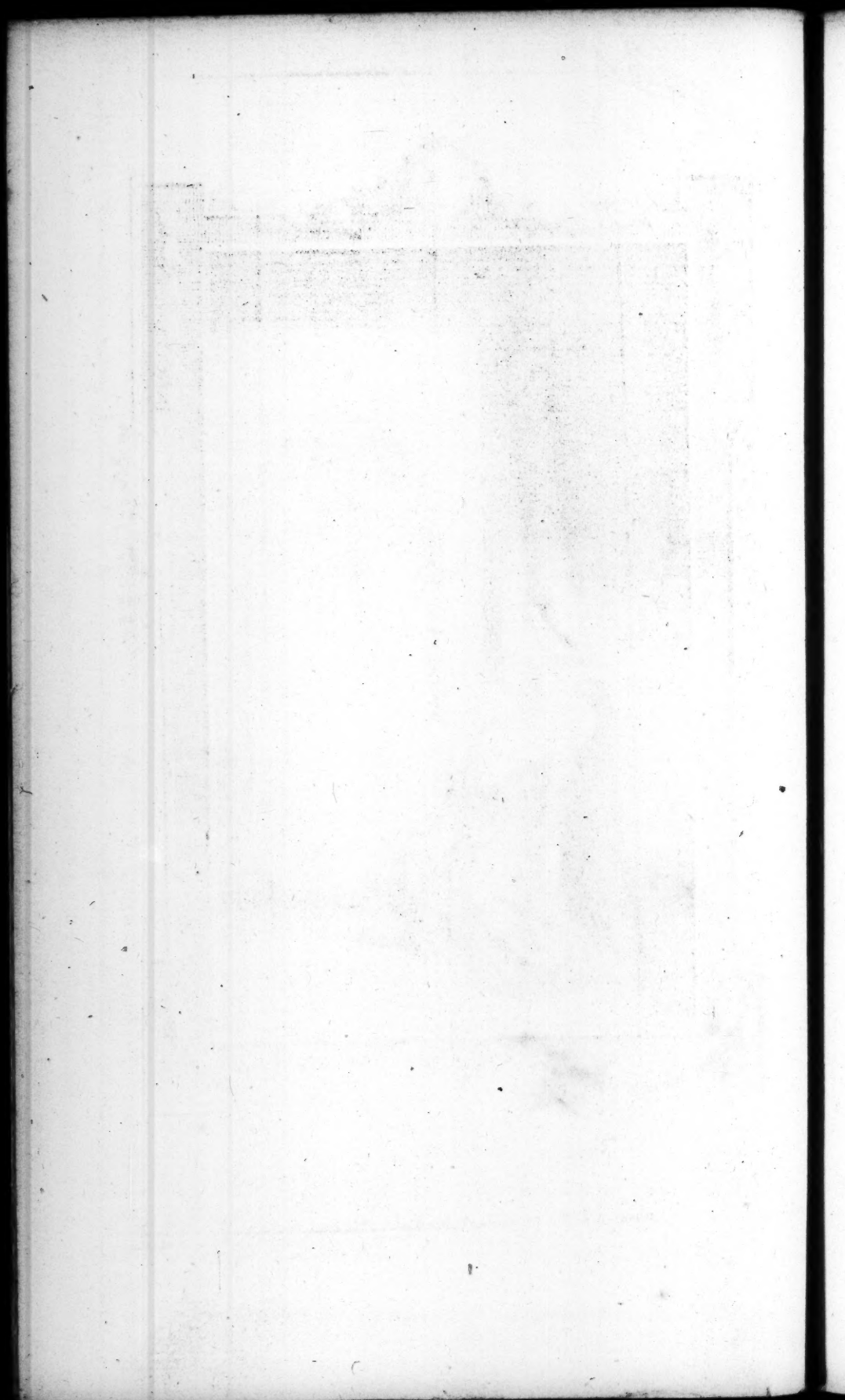
Valville, touched at this moving spectacle, part of which he had seen, as well as we, from the coach, forgot that he ought not to have appeared; and, without allowing himself time for reflection, ran into this little room. They had laid the young lady on the servant's bed; and she and I were un-

lacing her, to facilitate her respiration when he came in. Her head lay upon the pillow; one of her arms hung out of the bed, and the other was extended upon her side: and both, I must confess, were of an admirable form. Her eyes, though closed, had a particular charm; and I never saw any thing so moving as her countenance, on which death was painted: but it was an image which was only affecting, but not at all frightful. At this sight one would rather have chose to say that she does not live, than that she is dead. I am at a loss how to give you an idea of the impression she made upon me, any other way than by desiring you to distinguish these two expressions, which, though at first they appear to signify the same thing, have, nevertheless, a very different signification: she seemed then to be deprived of life, without having the deformity of death. In short, with that beautiful face thus reclined, with those delicate features, whose fading charms it were impossible not to lament; which, though we imagine them to be gone, are far from being so, since they take a nearer way to soften the heart, and inspire with tender pity; with those beautiful eyes, gracefully closed; there cannot be imagined an object more interesting; nor a situation more proper to affect the soul.

Valville was behind us, and had his eyes fixed upon her; I looked at him several times without his perceiving it: she took up all his thoughts. I was a little surprized to see it; but went no farther, and inferred nothing from it. Mrs. De Valville felt in her pocket for a smelling-bottle, which contained a spirit that was esteemed of the greatest efficacy in cases like this, but she had left it at home. Valville, who had one of them, suddenly approached, and made way through us with precipitation; and, putting one knee to the ground, tried to make her snuff up some of the spirit, and poured some into her mouth: this, added to our endeavours, brought her to herself, and made her half open her eyes, which she cast with a languid glance upon Valville; when he cried, with a tone which I thought as tender and affectionate as it was singular—'Come, Miss, take some more; snuff it up again.' And then, with a gesture that



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that was doubtless involuntary, took one of her hands, which he pressed between his; but which I immediately took from him, without knowing why. 'Softly, Sir!' said I; 'we should not disturb her too much.' He did not seem to hear me: but all this seemed, on both sides, as only the effect of that embarrassing our uneasiness and eager desire of assisting her occasioned. He was going to apply his smelling-bottle again to her nose, when she sighed; opened her eyes quite; lift up her hand I held in mine, and let it fall upon Valville's arm; who took hold of it, and still continued on his knee before her. 'Lord!' cried she, 'where am I?' Valville held her hand still; and I thought he pressed it, and did not seem to think of rising. The lady at last recovered her spirits; fixed her eyes upon Valville; and gently drew away her hand, without taking her eyes from him: and, as by the bottle he held in his hand, she guessed that he had contributed to her recovery—'I am very much obliged to you, Sir,' said she. 'Where is my mamma? Is she here still?'

That lady was at her bed's-head in a chair, in which they had placed her, and had hitherto been only able to sigh and weep. 'I am here, daughter,' replied she. 'O my dear Varthont! how you have frightened me! Here she lies: dies to whom you are very much obliged; as well as to this gentleman.'

Valville still continued in the same posture: I repeat it to you, because I began to be uneasy at it. The young lady returned perfectly to herself; looked around her upon us, and fixed her eyes again upon him; and then, perceiving the disorder she was in, and that she was unlaced, appeared confused, and out of countenance, and put her hand upon her stays. 'Will not you arise, Sir?' said I to Valville: 'all is over; the young lady has no longer any need of your assistance.'—'That is true,' returned he, with some disorder, and without ceasing to look at her. 'I would fain get up,' said she, leaning upon her mother, who helped her as well as she could. I was going to give her my hand, when Valville prevented me, and offered her his with an eager precipitation.

So much earnestness and assiduity on his side did not at all please me; but I

could give no reason why I disapproved of it. This little uneasiness made me act thus, without knowing what I did. How should I have known the motive? And, to all appearance, Valville behaved as innocently as myself. However, something extraordinary passed in his mind; for you have seen the rude manner in which I spoke to him two or three times, without his taking notice of it: he was not so surprised at it as he would have been at another time; or else he bore it as one who was conscious that he deserved it, and that I only did him justice. But to proceed.

The nuns were still waiting till the lady should be ready to go into the convent. She thanked Mrs. De Valville and I, with a very good grace, and a modest air, for the service we had rendered her: but I imagined that she seemed a little more embarrassed in the compliments she paid Mr. De Valville, and cast down her eyes when she spoke to him. 'Come, Madam,' added she, to her mother; 'to-morrow is the day of your departure: you have no time to lose; and I must enter the convent.' On this they embraced, not without shedding many tears. I suppress the polite compliments that passed between Mrs. De Valville and the English lady: this last related, in a few words, the reasons which obliged her to leave her daughter in the convent. 'My dear,' said my mamma, seeing them embrace for the last time, 'since you will have the honour of having this young lady's company, endeavour to gain her friendship, and forget nothing that may contribute to comfort her.'—'This is extremely kind,' said the English lady; 'it encourages me, in my turn, to take the liberty to recommend her to you.' To which Mrs. De Valville replied, that she begged leave to take her daughter to her house when she should come for me; which was accepted by the other with all imaginable tokens of gratitude.

Valville said not a word to all this: I observed his eyes oftener fixed upon the young lady than upon me; which, though it did not please me, I attributed only to the impulse of curiosity. How was it possible to suspect him who had loved me so tenderly; and had, the same day, given me such delightful proofs of his passion? who was so dear
to

to me; whom I had often told so; and who seemed charmed at being sure of it? Sure, did I say? perhaps he was too much so. Some minds, filled with a false and unmanly delicacy, relax in their tenderness as soon as they know they have gained ours. The desire of pleasing is attended with infinite charms, and prompts them to a behaviour that is accompanied with a real satisfaction; but as soon as they have found the way to our hearts, they are unemployed, and they neglect the person they think they have conquered.

However, the young lady, in return to the affection Mrs. De Valville recommended me to have for her, came very gracefully to me, threw her arms about my neck, and asked my friendship. This action, which was performed in the most frank and amiable manner, exceedingly moved me: I should not, perhaps, have behaved thus to her; though she did not appear unworthy of being loved; but my heart did not speak for her; or, to talk more intelligibly, I found a fund of coldness and indifference there, which I should have found some difficulty to overcome, though it could not withstand her caresses. I returned them with all the sensibility of which I was capable, and interested myself sincerely in her concerns: she, at last, tore herself from the embraces of her mother, and retired into the convent; when I called to let her know that I would be with her as soon as we had seen the abbess, with whom Mrs. De Valville desired to have a short conversation.

Her mother stepped into the coach, bathed in tears; and the next day set out for England. Mrs. De Valville went, for a moment, to speak to the abbess; saw me enter into the convent; and went to rejoin Valville, who had placed himself in the coach, where he waited for her. He left us just as we were going into the parlour to speak with the abbess, when I thought he did not seem less tender than usual: there was only one thing wanting; and that was, he forgot to ask his mother when he should see me again; and this forgetfulness I called to mind about a quarter of an hour after I had been in the convent. But our minds had been disconcerted; the young lady's accident had confused our ideas, and en-

grossed all our thoughts: besides, had not my mother said that she would return the next day, or the day after, and was not that sufficient? Thus I excused him; and blamed myself for being so foolish as to remark such a trifling instance of forgetfulness.

I was received by the abbess, the nuns of my acquaintance, and the boarders, in the most obliging manner: I have already told you they loved me, and that was very true; and especially the nun who had so agreeably vindicated me, and mortified the pride of the haughty boarder I have mentioned. After I had thanked them for the joy they expressed at my return, I ran to my new companion, whom I found in a deep melancholy, leaning upon a table in a thoughtful posture: she arose as soon as she perceived me, and came forward to embrace me, with all the marks of an extreme pleasure. It would have been difficult not to love her: her behaviour was simple, engaging, and tender; and, in fine, she had a heart in every respect like her manners. This is an eulogium which I cannot refuse her in spite of all the uneasiness she cost me. I soon conceived the most tender inclination for her; and hers for me, she said, began as soon as she saw me; when she could receive no other consolation but what sprang from the thought of having me for her companion.

'Promise me that you will love me,' and that we shall be inseparable,' added she, squeezing my hand, and with a tone and look whose sweetness penetrated my soul and constrained my belief; so that we tied the strictest knot of friendship, and our interests became inseparable. She was like a foreigner in a strange country, (though she was born in France) since she was separated from all her friends. Her father was dead; her mother was gone to England, and, possibly, might die there, and this be an eternal adieu; and the next day might let her know she was an orphan. I was one: but, though my misfortunes far exceeded those she had reason to apprehend, yet she was in danger of experiencing some part of them, and of being in a condition nearly resembling mine. This reflection attached me nearer to her; and I seemed to find in her a per-

son more really my companion than any other. She poured her grief into my bosom; we softened each other; and, in that effusion of tender and generous sentiments, to which our hearts abandoned themselves, she entertained me with the misfortunes of her family; and I, in return, related mine: but I did it to my own advantage; not, indeed, out of vanity; it was only the pure effect of the disposition of my mind. My story became interesting: I expressed myself in a language sublime and pathetick; I spoke like a victim of fortune, or the heroine of a romance; who, though she may say nothing but what is true, adorns that truth with every thing that can render it moving. Thus I appeared like a noble unfortunate: in a word, I deceived her in nothing; nor was I capable of that, but only represented things in words suited to the disposition of my mind, which was tender and elevated by a crowd of affecting ideas. The agreeable Miss Varthon listened to me with concern; she sighed with me, and mingled her tears with mine.

I gave her the history of my infancy; the character of my dear friends the vicar and his sister, with her arrival at Paris; and treated them with the same dignity as my own adventures: then I represented the situation I was in after her death, in the most melting language. I mentioned Father St. Vincent: Mr. De Climal I did not name; my respect and tenderness for his memory prevented me, though I told the injury he had done me, his repentance, and the reparation he had made me; even Mrs. Du Tour, with whom he placed me; Mrs. De Valville, to whom I gave no other name than that of a lady I had met with. I did not omit my fall in coming from church; nor the amiable young gentleman of a noble family, to whose house I had been carried; and should, perhaps, in the sequel of my history, have told her that this was the same who had assisted her; that the lady she had just seen was his mother; and that I was upon the point of marrying her son, had we not been interrupted by a lay-sister, who entered the room to tell us that supper was on the table, which made me break off at Mrs. De Valville's entering the church: so that this young lady could apply no-

thing that I had said to any of the persons she had seen with me.

We then went to supper. Miss Varthon, during this repast, complained of a violent pain in her head, which increasing, obliged her to rise from table, and to return into her room, whether I followed her; but, as she had need of repose, after an embrace, I retired; without having had any of the incidents which attended her fainting in my mind.

I arose next morning, earlier than ordinary, in order to wait upon her; when I found they were going to bleed her: alarmed at this sight, which I thought a preface of an approaching fit of illness, I burst into tears; she squeezed my hand, and endeavoured to remove my fears. 'It is nothing at all, my dear friend,' said she; 'it is only a slight indisposition, proceeding from my mind's being too much agitated yesterday, which has caused a little fever; that is all.' She was in the right; the bleeding calmed her disorder; the next day she found herself better: and this little indisposition, of which I had been so sensible, served only as a proof of my affection for her, and to increase hers for me, which the condition I fell into myself put to a harder trial.

She was but just up the next day, when I went into her room to fetch my work, which lay upon her table; but I was seized with such a dizziness as made me call for help. There were none in the room but herself and the nun my friend: they both immediately hastened to my relief. My dizziness went off, and I sat down; but it returned from time to time: I then found a difficulty of breathing; then a heaviness upon my senses; and at last an almost total privation of them. The nun felt my pulse, and appeared uneasy; but said nothing that might alarm me: she proposed I should be put to bed; and Miss Varthon and she carried me into my room. I would fain have resisted my disorder, and have persuaded myself that nothing ailed me; but I could hold it out no longer: they put me to bed; and I desired them to leave me.

They had scarce left the room, when a letter was brought me from Mrs. De Valville: it contained only two lines; which were as follow.

'I have

'I Have not been able to see thee these two days: do not be uneasy, my dear; to-morrow, about noon, I will come and take thee with me.'

'Is there no other note, sister?' said I to the nun who brought it. I asked this, because I imagined Valville might have wrote me a letter, since he had so good an opportunity for sending it. 'No,' returned she; 'this is all the maid received of the footman, who waits for an answer. Have you any thing to say to him, Miss?'—'Yes; pray, reach me a pen and ink,' said I: and, as ill as I was, I made the following reply.

'I Return you a thousand thanks, dear mamma, for your kindness in letting me hear from you. I find myself a little indisposed, and am just put to bed: but I hope this disorder will be of no ill consequence; and that to-morrow I shall be ready for you. Accept of my humble duty.'

I could not possibly have wrote any more; and, two hours after, I had a high fever, and was light-headed; when it soon encreased to such a degree that my life was despaired of: I grew quite raving, and knew neither Miss Varthon, my friend the nun, nor even my mother, who was permitted to come to see me, and whom I only distinguished from the rest by the earnestness with which I looked upon her, without speaking at all. I remained in pretty near the same condition for four days together; during which time I neither knew where I was, nor who spoke to me; and had been let blood without being sensible of it. The fifth day the fever abated; I came to myself; and the first sign I gave of it was, that, seeing Mrs. De Valville at the bed's-head, I cried out—'Ah, mamma!' She was then reaching out her arm towards me, and was going to embrace me: I drew my hand out of bed to seize hers; put it to my mouth; and, for a long time, held it there, as if it had been glewed to my lips. I saw Miss Varthon, and some nuns, about my bed; and observed that the former seemed overwhelmed with sadness. 'I must have been very

'ill,' said I, in a low and faint voice; 'and, without doubt, have given you all a great deal of trouble.'—'Yes, daughter,' replied Mrs. De Valville; 'there is nobody here that have not given you proofs of their goodness: but, thank God! you are now out of danger.' Miss Varthon came near, and pressed my hand between hers with an air of the sincerest friendship; and said some tender things to me, which I only answered with a smile, and a look which shewed my gratitude. Two days after I was entirely out of danger; my fever had quite left me; but my weakness lasted a great while. Mrs. De Valville, who had been only permitted to see me on account of the great danger I had been in, appeared no more when that was over.

But I had like to have forgot one thing; and that is, that the next day after I began to recover, I reflected that I might probably have a relapse, which might be fatal to me: I thought, too, on the deed of gift Mr. De Climal had left me. 'To whom will it be long?' said I. 'It will probably be lost to the family: and justice, as well as gratitude, demand that I should restore it to them.' While these thoughts employed my mind, there was nobody in the room with me but a lay-sister: Miss Varthon had just left me; the nuns were in the choir; and I found myself at liberty. 'Sister,' said I, 'my life, a few days ago, was despaired of; my fever is now, indeed, abated; but we cannot be sure that it will not return with the same, or even a greater, violence: however, I desire you would raise me up a little, and give me pen, ink, and paper, that I may write a line or two, which is absolutely necessary.'—'Pray, Miss, consider a little,' returned she. 'Why do you talk so? You seem to be inclined to make your will. You ought not to indulge such thoughts; but rather to thank God for your recovery.'—'Pray, sister,' said I, interrupting her, 'do not refuse me; I will only write a line or two: I shall have done in an instant.' At last, she gave them me; and I wrote as follows.

'I Give to Mrs. De Valville, to whom I am indebted for all I have, the deed of gift which Mr. De

'De Climal, her brother, lately deceased, had the charity to leave me; I return also, to the same lady, every thing I am possessed of, to dispose of as she pleases.

'MARIANNE.'

I put this paper under my pillow, with an intention to give it into my mother's hands the next time she came; and it had not been wrote above a quarter of an hour before she entered the room. 'Well, daughter, how do you do?' said she, feeling my pulse. 'I think you are better than you were yesterday. Come, I hope you are in a fair way to do well; you only want to recover your strength.' I then took the paper, and slipped it into her hand. 'What dost thou give me here?' cried she. 'Let us see.' She opened, and read it; but could not help laughing. 'What a mad thing thou art, child!' said she: 'thou makest me thy executrix, and art in better health than myself.' She had some reason for saying so, for she was very much altered. 'Come, child; to all appearance, you will have no occasion to make your will this great while: it will be time enough to do that long after I have left this life,' added she, tearing the paper, and throwing it into the chimney. 'Keep what you have for my grand-children; I hope thou wilt have no other heirs.'—'Why, mamma, do you talk of leaving me? I had rather die now, than live to survive you.'—'Hold your tongue,' returned she. 'Is it not natural to suppose I should go before you? Is it not according to the course of nature that I should do so? The extravagance of your paper makes me mention it. Come, let us think of living; and do you make haste to recover, lest Valville should fall sick too. Such a long absence, I am sure, must be insupportable to him.' We were talking thus, when Miss Varthon and the physician entered. The latter thought me quite out of danger, though I was very weak; so that my mother came no more, and was satisfied with sending to know how I did.

Mrs. De Valville had always, during her visits, caressed Miss Varthon in the most friendly and obliging manner; and it was agreed, that, as soon as I

was fit to go abroad, we should go together to dine with her.

The next day, when Miss Varthon was in my room, she was told a person from Mrs. De Valville desired to speak with her. 'I fancy it is about you,' said she, as she left me to go to the parlour; nor did I doubt that I was really the subject of the message. You must observe that I had not resumed the sequel of my adventures since the day I had told her part of them; and that she was entirely ignorant of my love to Valville, and my being designed for his wife: she was indisposed the first day after she entered the convent; my illness had seized me two days after; and it had, therefore, been impossible for me to give her the continuation of my story.

'So, Miss,' said she, as she entered my room, with an air of gaiety; 'you did not tell me that the agreeable young gentleman who joined with you in recovering me from my fit was Mrs. De Valville's son. Did you know that it was he who waited for me in the parlour?'—'Who?' 'Mr. De Valville!' returned I, with some surprize. 'Pray, what did he want with you? You have been a great while together.'—'About a quarter of an hour,' returned she. 'He told me he came from his mother, to know how you did. He was commissioned to give her compliments to me; and has been pleased to pay me a polite visit.'—'He was in the right!' returned I, in a thoughtful and reserved air. 'Has not he given you a letter for me? Did not Mrs. De Valville write to me?'—'No,' said she, 'there is no letter at all.'

Here some of the boarders, who were my friends, entered, and obliged us to change the conversation. I was surprized that Valville, who, in less interesting circumstances, had embraced every opportunity of writing to me, and had so often added a few lines to my mother's letters, did not, on this occasion, give me the same marks of his regard. 'In the height of my disorder,' said I to myself, 'his letters might have been unseasonable: but, after I have been thought to be on the brink of death, he ought, surely, to congratulate my returning to life, and join with me in

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‘thanking Heaven for my recovery; but he neglects it, and gives me not the least tokens of his joy. If he thinks it improper, in the languishing state I am in at present, to send me a separate letter, he might desire his mother to write me one, to give him an opportunity to add some lines to it by his own hand: but he thinks of nothing. This negligence disturbs me: it is not behaving like himself. What is become of my dear Valville?’ continued I. ‘Surely this is no longer his heart, which has hitherto been so soft, so passionate, and tender!’ In short, his behaviour sincerely grieved me; and I could not help being offended at it.

‘I have refused, till to-day,’ said Miss Varthon to me, while our companions were talking to each other, ‘to go and dine with a lady who is an intimate friend of my mother’s, and to whom she has recommended me. You are too weak to go with me; and I am not willing to leave you: but this morning, before I entered your room, I sent her word, by a footman who came from her, that I would wait upon her to-morrow. But, however,’ added she, ‘if you wish me to stay with you, I will send to excuse myself. Come; shall I stay? I assure you I had rather be with you.’—‘No,’ returned I, taking hold of her hand in an affectionate manner; ‘pray, go: you must comply with the desire she has of seeing you. Only be so kind as to return half an hour sooner than otherwise you would do, and I shall be very well satisfied.’—‘But I should not be so,’ returned she; ‘you must give me leave to shorten the visit a little more: I do not care to be uneasy so long together as you would have me.’

Let us pass, then, to the next day. Miss Varthon went to her mother’s friend; whose coach came to fetch her so very early, that she was quite out of humour at being obliged to leave me so soon: however, she returned much later than I expected. ‘I have not been able to leave them,’ said she; ‘they kept me, in spite of myself.’ And nothing could be more probable. Some days after she went thither again, and repeated her visits very often: she could not avoid it, she said, unless she would break with the lady, and I did

not at all doubt it; but methought she always returned with a look more thoughtful and absent than ordinary. I told her my opinion: but she said I was mistaken; and I took no more notice of it. I then began to be able to leave my bed, though I was still very weak. My mother sent every day to the convent to enquire after my health; she even wrote to me once or twice; but I did not receive a line from Valville. ‘My son,’ said she, ‘is very impatient to see thee again; he is disturbed at thy being so long on thy recovery: he intended to have added some lines to this note; I have waited for him to do it; but he is not returned home yet, and must defer giving himself that satisfaction till another time.’ This was all the news I could hear of him. I was so shocked and so angry at it, that, in the replies I returned to my mamma, I ceased making any mention of him. In my last, I told her I had strength enough to carry me to the parlour, if she would be so good as to come and see me the next day. ‘My only illness now is, that I do not see my dear mamma,’ added I: ‘make haste then, dear Madam, I entreat you, to complete my recovery.’ I did not at all doubt of her coming; which she did not fail to do; but we neither of us foresaw the grief and extreme trouble in which she found me the next day.

That evening Miss Varthon and I were alone, and took a turn or two in my room. ‘You fancied, some days ago, that I seemed a little thoughtfully,’ said she; ‘and I think that to-day you seem very much so. You have something in your mind that disturbs you; and I am much deceived if you had not just been crying yesterday morning before I entered your room. I desire to know, my dear companion, what it is that troubles you? In the situation I am in, I can be of no service to you; but your uneasiness disturbs me, and makes me fear some ill consequence of it. Remember that you have been very ill; and that to give yourself up to melancholy, is not the way to recover your health. Our friendship requires that I should say this; but I will go no farther.’—‘Dear Miss,’ said I, ‘I assure you I have no intention to hide my uneasiness from you; my heart has no se-

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secret which it would conceal from my friend. I have not long been convinced that I have had sufficient cause to be disturbed; and I should not have let this evening pass without trusting you with it: I cannot refuse myself this consolation. Yes, my dear," replied I, after a short pause, and fetching a deep sigh; "I have, indeed, reason for being troubled: I have already related to you the greatest part of my history; your illness prevented my giving you the sequel; and here it is in a few words. Mrs. DeValville is that lady whom, if you remember, I told you I met in the convent: you have been witness of her behaviour towards me; every body would take her for my mother; and, from the first moment she saw me, she has constantly treated me in the same manner. But this is not all; that Mr. DeValville, who came the other day to see you—" "How! Mr. DeValville! is he against you?" said she, interrupting me. "Is he displeased with his mother's friendship for you?"—"No; pray hear me," said I: "that is not the case. Mr. DeValville is the same young gentleman I have also told you of, to whose house I was carried after my fall, and who from that moment conceived a most violent passion for me; a passion so tender, that I cannot doubt of it's being real. Mrs. DeValville knows of our mutual affection; knows that he would marry me; and, notwithstanding my misfortunes, has herself consented to it: but for some reasons it has been retarded, and perhaps it will never now be concluded; at least, Valville's conduct makes me despair of it." Miss Varthon interrupted me no more: she listened with a pensive air, cast down her eyes, and did not even look at me. "You know from what dangers I have escaped," continued I; "I have but just been saved from death. Before my illness, his mother hardly ever wrote the least note to me but he sent me one with it, or added a few lines to hers: and yet this same man, whom I have been accustomed to see so tender, so affectionate; he who has thought of losing me, and who ought to be so alarmed at the state I was in; he whom I could scarce believe able to support his fears on my account, and who ought

to have been transported with joy at seeing me out of danger; can you believe it, Miss? has not let me hear from him; has not wrote me a single word; he who has loved me so tenderly—not one short note! Is this natural? What would he have me think of it? And what would you think, if you were in my place?" Here I paused for a moment, and stood still: Miss Varthon continued silent too; but she always left me a little behind her, continued mute, and avoided turning her head towards me. "Not one letter," resumed I; "he who had been so prodigal of them on less important occasions. Once more I say, can you think it possible? Have I lost his heart, instead of that life which I had much rather have parted with? Oh, how am I troubled! But tell me, Miss—a thought arises suddenly in my mind—may not he be sick? May not Mrs. DeValville, who knows that I love him, hide it from me? She has a sincere affection for me, and may be afraid of afflicting me: have not you had the same kindness for me? Did not you pretend a visit from Mr. DeValville only to hinder my suspecting the truth? For it appears impossible to me that he should be guilty of such negligence; and I assure you, I should be less afflicted to hear of his being ill. He is young, Miss, and may recover; but, if he is inconstant, there can be no remedy. This last motive of inquietude is more sharp and cruel than the other. I entreat you, then, to confess his disorder; you will compose my mind: be so kind as to tell me; I shall be discreet."

She made no answer: her silence made me grow impatient; I took hold of her arm, and seated myself before her, to oblige her to answer me. But judge of my astonishment, when, instead of a reply, I heard some sighs, and saw her countenance bathed in tears. "Oh, Miss!" cried I, turning pale, "why do you weep? What mean those tears?" I asked what my heart began already to preface: my eyes were opened; every thing that had passed during her fit rushed into my mind. She stood near an easy-chair, into which she threw herself: I sat by her, and wept too. "Come, Miss, you need make use of no disguise with

me,' said I; 'I believe I understand you. Where have you seen Mr. De Valville? Unkind, unworthy man! is it possible that he loves me no more?'—'Alas! my dear Marianne,' returned she; 'O that I had but been acquainted with this before!'—'Well,' rejoined I, 'speak freely; have you robbed me of his heart?'—'Say, rather, that I have lost my own!' replied she. 'What! he loves you, then; and you return his passion? How unhappy am I!'—'We have both reason to complain,' returned she. 'He has not mentioned you to me. I confess I love him; but I will never see him again.'—'He will love me no more!' cried I, shedding a flood of tears; 'he will love me no more! Oh! where am I? and what shall I do?'—'Alas! Mrs. De Valville, I shall not then be your daughter! In vain you have been so generous to me!—What! you, Mr. De Valville, you unfaithful to Marianne! you who have loved her with such a transporting tenderness! you abandon her!—Is it you, Miss, that take him from me? you who have had the cruelty to contribute to my recovery! Oh, that you had rather let me die! How is it possible to survive his loss? I have given my heart to both; and, in return, you both give me death! Oh, I shall never support a life of such torture!'—'Pray, do not reproach me,' returned she, in a moving tone; 'I am not capable of a perfidious action: I will tell you every thing; he deceived me!'—'He deceived you!' interrupted I, in my turn. 'Ah, Miss! why did you listen to him? Why did you love him? Why did you encourage his passion? Your mamma was but just gone, and left you overwhelmed with grief; how, then, had you the courage to love? Besides, you knew he was not my brother: you had seen us together; he is amiable, and I am young; and was it difficult to imagine that we might love? What is your excuse? But, pray, tell me where you have seen him? What methods did you take to deprive me of his tenderness? Never, sure, had any man so much as he: never will he find one so tender as me! He will regret his forsaking me; but I shall be no more! He will remember how much I loved him; he will lament my death: you

will have the grief to see it; you will reproach yourself with having betrayed me, and never enjoy any solid happiness.'—'Have I betrayed you?' returned she. 'Ah, my dear Marianne! is it possible I should confess that I love him, if I had not been myself deceived? But it is I that must be the victim of his infidelity. Endeavour to calm your mind, so as to hear me for a moment. You have a soul too great to suffer you to be unjust, though you seem to be so: judge of me by my sincerity. I had never seen him before my fainting at parting with my mamma. As soon as I returned to myself, the first object that struck me was Valville on his knee before me; he had my hand in his: I do not know whether you observed the looks he cast upon me; but, weak as I was, I could not help taking notice of them. He is amiable; you acknowledge it yourself; and I thought so too: his eyes were fixed upon me till I entered the convent; and, unhappily, I could not help taking notice of it. I knew not who he was; and what you told me of your history could give me no light into it. It is true, I sometimes had him in my thoughts; but it was only as one that I imagined I should never see more. I was told, some days after, that a person they did not name desired to speak to me from Mrs. De Valville. I was then with you: I went down, and found it was he that waited for me. I blushed at seeing him: he appeared embarrassed; and his embarrassment gave me some confusion. He asked, with a smile, if I knew him, and had not forgot that I had ever seen him: he told me that my fainting made him tremble, and that he was never so moved in his life as at the condition in which he had seen me; that it had been ever since present before him; that his heart was struck with it; and then begged my pardon for the freedom with which he explained himself on that subject.'

Whilst she was speaking thus, she did not perceive that her words went to my heart: she heard neither my sighs nor my groans; she wept too much herself to give any attention to them; and, cruel as her recital was, my heart attended to it, and could not renounce the

the pangs it felt at every word she uttered. 'For my part,' she resumed, 'I was so moved at his discourse, that I was unable to stop him. He did not tell me, however, that he loved me; but I was very sensible that this was what he would intimate: and it was said in a manner which it would have been unreasonably to have been offended at.'

"I held that lovely hand in mine," added he. "You no sooner opened your eyes, but you saw me at your feet; and it was with the greatest difficulty I arose from thence: I must still prostrate myself before you, whenever I behold your charms."—"Oh! he casts himself at your feet?" cried I. "He prostrates himself before you, even whilst I am dying! I am then entirely banished from his heart: he never said any thing so tender to me!"—"I cannot recollect what answer I made him," returned she: "all that I remember, is, that I concluded with telling him that I must retire, and that I had suffered his conversation too long; when he excused himself with such an air of submission and respect as soon appeased me. I arose up, and was going to leave him; when he turned his discourse on my mamma, and of the great desire Mrs. De Valville had to see me at her house. He mentioned, too, the Marchioness of Kilnaire, whom, he said, we were both acquainted with; and at this lady's house I have been three or four times since your recovery. He added, that he was to sup that evening with one of her relations. In fine, when I was going to leave him, "I had like to have forgot," said he, "a letter which my mother desired me to deliver to you." He blushed at giving it me. I took it, as I sincerely thought it came from Mrs. De Valville: but he was no sooner gone, than I found it was his own. I opened it in my coming back

to you, with an intention to let you see it: however, I did not; and you will see the reason that hindered me.' She then drew the letter out of her pocket, gave it me open, and desired me to read it. I took it with a trembling hand; and durst not, at first, look upon those characters which had before often filled me with delight: at last, however, I cast a look upon it, and wet it with my tears. 'He writes,' cried I; 'but it is not to me! it is no longer to the unhappy Mariannel!' I was so penetrated with this reflection, it stuck so close to my heart, that for a long time I breathed nothing but sighs, and was unable to begin to read it. It was pretty short; and ran thus—

"SINCE the day of your melancholy accident, Miss, I have not been myself. I foresaw that, in coming here to-day, my respect for you would hinder me from telling you what an impression you have made upon my mind: but I have foreseen, too, that my timid and troubled countenance would acquaint you with it. You have seen me tremble before you. I fear this letter will offend you; but my heart will not be bolder than it was when I was in your presence; it trembles still. You have doubtless conceived an affection for Miss Marianne; and it is very likely that, at your leaving the parlour, you will go and make her the confidante of your surprize, and perhaps of your indignation, on my account: but I beg you would forbear; you would wrong me in the opinion of my mother, from whom your friend conceals nothing. I shall give you, another time, a reason for my request. Dear Miss, my secret has escaped me: I adore you. I had not dared to tell you so, if you had not known it."

I shall reserve, Madam, the sequel of this adventure, for the Eighth Part.

END OF THE SEVENTH PART.



THE
VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.
PART VIII.



Could not forbear laughing very heartily, Madam, at your anger against my perfidious lover. Could any thing be more diverting? You desire to know when you may expect the sequel of my adventures; and say you wait for it with the utmost impatience. But I must not mention a word more of Valville: you cannot bear the very thought of him. I fancy that, instead of the life of your friend, you have insensibly brought yourself to believe you were reading a romance; and, this granted, there must be some reason for the violence of your indignation. What! an unfaithful, romantick hero! Sure never was heard such a prodigy! It is an established rule, that they all of them ought to be true; and it is on this account only that we interest ourselves in their concerns: besides, nothing is more easy than to render them so; it costs no more pains; and fiction alone is at the expence of the whole. But infidelity is uncommon no where but in this visionary, romantick world. I am here representing things as they really are; as the instability of all human things render them; and not the adventures of the brain, which may be framed as we please: not a fictitious heart, but the heart of a man, a Frenchman, and one that now really exists; a contemporary of the lovers of the present age. This, Madam, I say, is the sum of his character: he had only these three trifling difficulties to overcome towards being as constant as your most

renowned heroes; and pray, do not lose sight of this. I would have you look upon him with the eye of an unconcerned spectator. We have all of us some faults mingled with our perfections; and no man is entirely exempt from them. You, at first, thought him charming, and now think him quite hateful; but you will soon conceive a more favourable opinion of him.

Valville, who, the first moment he saw me, loved me with a tenderness as lively as it was sudden; a passion commonly of a short duration, and much like those early fruits which are frequently blasted before they arrive to maturity; Valville, I say, notwithstanding his volatile disposition, was, even then, a very honest man, but was born with a mind extremely susceptible of soft impressions: he meets with a dying beauty who touches him, and snatches me from his heart; but he has not left me for ever; he is only cloyed with the pleasure of loving me, because he at first enjoyed it too greedily. But his taste will return to him; he rambles only to recover himself: he hunts after a new beauty; and I, in my turn, shall become one more charming to him than ever. He will see me in a situation that will melt his heart: my grief, and the tender dispositions of my mind, will entirely alter me, and give me graces hitherto unknown to him. You see, Madam, I make a jest of it now; though I wonder how I could then bear up under it. Let us now proceed; and enter upon this moving part of my adventures.

We

We are now at Valville's letter; which I read over, notwithstanding the sighs and tears which almost suffocated me; while Miss Varthon, with her eyes fixed on the floor, was weeping too, and seemed in a profound reverie. As for me, I sat almost senseless, with my head leaning on the back of my chair: at last I lifted it up, and began again to look over the letter. 'Ah, Valville!' cried I, 'I have nothing now to do but to die!' And then, casting my eyes upon Miss Varthon—'Do not afflict yourself, Miss,' said I; 'you will soon be both at liberty to love each other: I shall not live long; this will be the last of all my misfortunes!'

At this discourse, the young lady, starting suddenly from her penive and thoughtful posture, addressed me with a firm and resolute air—'Why do you resolve to die?' said she; 'for whom do you afflict yourself? Is this a man worthy of your grief? worthy of your tears? Is this the man you professed to love? Is he what you thought him? Would you have considered him as worthy your esteem, had you known him? Would you then have given him your heart, or have accepted of his? It is true, you once thought him amiable; and imagined he had a mind that deserved your esteem: and I thought so too; but we were both deceived. He wants those virtues which are necessary to constitute the character of a gentleman: his behaviour renders him despicable. He loves you; he is going to marry you; you fall sick, and he is told your life is in danger: he then forgets you, and takes that opportunity to declare that he loves me; me whom he had only seen for a moment, and who had hardly said two words to him. Ah! what love was that he had for you? What name can be given to that he has for me? From whence can proceed the fancy of indulging a new passion in such circumstances as these? Alas! it was only because he thought he saw me dying: the sight moved his little, weak, unsteady mind, which is the sport of every new and singular object. If he had seen me in perfect health, he would have taken no notice of me: my fainting was the cause of his infidelity; and, perhaps, even you, who are so lovely, so capable of inspiring that tender passion,

owed your conquest, by which you were able to fix him a few months, to your misfortunes, and your fall at his door. I acknowledge he took a great deal of notice of you at church; but that was only because you were charming; and his admiration, it is likely, would not have proceeded to love, without the assistance of your situation and your fall.—'However, he loved me!' cried I, interrupting her; 'he loved me! and you have taken him from me: and perhaps I had nobody in the world to fear but you.'—'Pray let me make an end,' continued she; 'I have not done yet. I have confessed that he was agreeable to me; but do not imagine that I have let him know it; for he has not the least suspicion; nor is he worthy of being acquainted with it: and, prejudiced as you are, doubtless, now against me, I beg you would keep it secret; if not out of friendship, at least out of generosity. A young lady of your excellent disposition, need not a particular affection for people to make you use them kindly, when there is no just reason for being displeased with them. Farewel, Marianne!' added she, rising; 'I leave you Valville's letter; make what use of it you please; shew it to Mrs. De Valville; shew it to her son; you have my consent to it; I cannot be blamed for what he has the assurance to write to me; and if you should desire me to confront him, and make him publicly blush for his conduct, I am so incented against him, and so much despise his ridiculous love, that I shall make no scruple of it; and shall readily join with you in your resentment. However, I have taken a resolution never to see him more, without you require it of me. I will forget that I have ever seen him; and if I meet him, I will not seem to know him; for flying from him would be doing him too much honour. You, I believe, are neither ambitious nor selfish; and, if you are only affectionate and reasonable, you will lose nothing. As Valville is unworthy of your tenderness, you ought not to regret the loss of him. You must consider yourself as if you never had a lover; for to have a general one, is to have none at all: yesterday he was yours; to-day he is mine, if I must believe

“believe him; and to-morrow he will be another’s; and yet will still have no sincere passion for any body. Leave him, then, at large; and reserve your heart, as I shall mine, for one who will give you his in return.”

Here she came to me, and gave me a friendly embrace, which I received without the least emotion; I only looked earnestly at her, and let my eyes wander over her. She took one of my hands, and pressed it between hers; whilst I let her do as she pleased, without being able to make any reply, or to return her caresses. I did not know whether I should love or hate her; treat her as a rival or a friend; though, methought, I had some sentiments of gratitude in my soul for those marks of friendship I received from her, as well as for the resolution she had taken to see Valville no more. I heard her sigh as she left me. “I shall not see you again till to-morrow,” said she; “and I hope I shall find you then more serene, and more sensible of my friendship.” To all this I could still make her no reply; and only followed her with my eyes till she was gone.

I was then left alone, leaning back in the chair; where I remained about half an hour, with my thoughts so disturbed and confused, that I seemed almost stupified. The nun I have already mentioned as peculiarly deserving the character of my friend, at last entered, and surprized me in this disordered state of mind. Though I saw her, I did not stir; and, I believe, I should have kept myself in the same situation, if even the whole body of nuns and boarders had entered too. There are afflictions so violent as to make us forget ourselves, in which the soul has not the discretion to make a secret of the state it is in; it is not at all embarrassed at being made a spectacle of to others; it entirely forgets itself: and this was exactly my case. The nun, astonished at my not moving to salute her, at my silence, and my wild and stupid look, came towards me in a kind of fright. “My dear, what is the matter? What ails you?” cried she. “Are you ill?” “Not,” returned I; and then was silent. “But what is the matter, then?” “You look pale, dejected; and I think you are crying too: have you received any ill news?” “Yes,” returned I; and then stopped again. She

knew not what to think of my monosyllables, and the faint manner in which I pronounced them. At last, she perceived the letter, which I was still holding with a weak and trembling hand, and which was wet with my tears. “Is this, my dear, the cause of your affliction?” added she, taking hold of it. “Will you permit me to read it?” — “Yes,” cried I. “Pray, who does it come from?” she rejoined. “Alas! come from——” I could say no more; my grief stopped my voice. She seemed extremely moved; and I observed she wiped her eyes, and then read the letter. “Come, Miss,” said she, “this lets me into the whole matter. You are full of consternation, and give way to your grief: I sympathize with you in your affliction. You are young, and want experience: you are born with a noble soul; with a heart sincere, and void of artifice; and this is a reason why you are more penetrated with a misfortune of this kind. Yes, Miss, sigh, complain, and indulge your grief. I am not a stranger to the situation you are now in; I have experienced it, and was as much afflicted as you: but a friend, nearly of the age I am now of, surprized me in the condition I now see you in, and endeavoured to console me: she talked reason; I listened to her, and at last received comfort.” — “She comforted you, Madam!” cried I, lifting up my eyes to Heaven. “She comforted you, did you say?” — “Yes,” returned she: “you do not conceive it possible; and I then thought so too.”

“Let us see,” said my friend, “for what it is you thus give yourself up to despair: it is for one of the most frequent occurrences of life; and which is hardly of any consequence to you. You love a man who returned your affection, and now leaves you for another; and you call this a very great misfortune: but are you sure it deserves that name? and may it not be quite the contrary? How can you tell but his infidelity may be an advantage to you? and that you would repent your having married him? that his jealousy, his ill-humour, his debauchery, and a thousand other essential faults which he may have unknown to you, might make

“ make you groan out a tedious, unhappy life? You only look upon the present moment: cast your views a little farther, and consider that his infidelity may be a blessing from Heaven. That over-ruling Providence which presides over all things, is conducted by unerring wisdom; and the Father of mankind knows what will promote our happiness better than we do: his love infinitely exceeds that we have for ourselves. You are now lamenting an imaginary misfortune, which in a little time will, perhaps, be the subject of your joy: take courage, then; if he is not destined for your husband, you will be a gainer by losing him; as I myself have been in being abandoned by one who was dear to me, and who forsook me for another who is miserable in that condition in which I once wished myself, and which I foolishly imagined would make me completely happy. You love him, you will say; and, as you have no fortune, his wealth would become yours: but could nothing but his infidelity deprive you of it? Was he secure from every illness, might he not die before your marriage? and would not every thing then be lost? Would there be no resource left for you? and does his unfaithfulness deprive you now of the comforts you would then have enjoyed? Though you love him now, do you think you shall never be able to love any but him? Are there none so rich, none so amiable, as he? To what purpose, then, is your uneasiness? You are young, and have but just entered upon life; you are blessed with a happy genius, an amiable soul, and a fine person; you have a variety of pleasing prospects before you: and yet give yourself up to despair for a man who will, perhaps, return to you again.” This is what my friend told me, added the nun, “ in the first transports of my grief: and I will tell you the rest when you are capable of attending to me.”

Here I fetched one of those sighs which escape us when we are told something which moderates our afflictions: she perceived it. “ These motives of consolation touched me,” continued she; “ and they ought to have still a

greater weight with you, to whom they are more applicable than they were to me. My friend spoke to me of my perfections; but you have more of them. I do not tell you this to flatter you: I was agreeable enough, but had not your charms. As to the qualities of your mind, you have received proofs of the impression they make upon every body: you know the esteem and tenderness Mrs. De Valville has for you; and I know not one sensible person in our house that is not prejudiced in your favour. Mrs. Dorlin, who is so good a judge of true merit, is ready to be another Mrs. De Valville to you: you delight every body at her house; and wherever you appear it is the same. I do not pretend to make any account of my own judgment; yet, though I am pretty difficult, and not easily pleased, I was struck with your presence, and instantly became ambitious of being your friend. Who could be otherwise? Then, what is it to you to be deprived of a lover who dishonours himself in leaving you; and who is not, in my opinion, the most considerable of all the matches that will be offered you? Therefore compose your mind, Marianne; make yourself perfectly easy; it does not require any great effort of reason to be so: for the least degree of spirit, joined to what I have told you, is more than sufficient to give you that tranquillity you stand in need of.”

I then looked at her in a manner that shewed I was half vanquished by her reasons, and half softened with a grateful sense of the pains she took to calm my troubled mind; and gave her my hand, with an air of friendship and affection, which seemed to say—“ How soothing is the confidence of a friend! How sweet the satisfaction of being in such hands as yours!” I found my affliction began to abate; for we are very near receiving comfort, when we take an affection for those who try to assuage our grief. This obliging lady staid about an hour longer with me, insinuating the most pleasing things; which she had the art to make me think extremely judicious; and though, indeed, they were so, yet it was necessary, in order to gain my attention, that they should be set off with that affectionate

tone, and that look of benevolence, with which she uttered them.

At last, the bell rung to call her to supper: as for me, I had my provisions still brought me into my room. 'Well,' said she, smiling, 'I am glad I do not leave you so inconsiderate and void of reflection as I found you: you are now become reasonable; you know yourself, and will do yourself justice.' Believe me, you were much to blame to give way to such excessive, such immoderate, grief and dejection of spirit. I cannot easily pardon it; and shall take the liberty to chide you for it this great while. I could not help smiling at this friendly railery, which disposed me to think that I had really exaggerated my misfortunes. 'Sure my friend would not take this method to comfort me,' thought I, 'if my affliction was so very serious as I have imagined it!'

She had no sooner left me, than one of the lay-sisters brought me my supper, and began to set some things to rights in my room. This woman was naturally of a gay disposition. 'Come, come,' said she, 'you are almost as fresh as a rose already; you have quite recovered your illness, and there is not the least appearance of it left: will not you take a little walk in the garden after supper?'—'No,' replied I; 'I feel myself fatigued, and design to go to bed as soon as I have eat a little.'—'Well, well,' returned she, 'all in good time: sleeping will do you as much good as walking.' On this she left me.

You will easily judge that I made but a very light supper; for, though my friend the nun had recovered my spirits, and taught me to moderate my uneasiness, yet I continued still in a very deep melancholy: I revolved in my mind all she had told me. She had said I had but just begun to live—'You are in the right,' said I to myself; 'my fate is not yet decided; and I ought to prepare myself for many other events. Others will love me; he will see it; and they will teach him to revive his esteem. A man who is inconstant, thinks he leaves the injured lady solitary; but, when he sees his place filled up by another, he begins to think himself mistaken, and looks upon it as an accident he could not have foreseen: he can hard-

ly believe it is her that he discarded; and seems surprized to find she has still so many charms.' New thoughts succeeded to these. 'Is he not the most amiable, the most tender, of mankind? And must I lose him? Shall I ever find one like him? Ah, Mr. De Valville! the charms of Miss Varthion will not justify you; and I shall, perhaps, have as many admirers as she.' Upon this, I wept; and went to bed. Amongst the various thoughts which revolved in my mind, there was one which I at last fixed upon. 'Why should I,' said I to myself, 'who have virtue and sense, who have a character and sentiments which render me generally esteemed, with all the charms of youth, have the weakness to destroy myself with a grief which, perhaps, will be thought interested, and which will only serve to swell the vanity of a man who treats me so unworthily?' This last reflection roused up my courage; it had something noble in it, that inspired me with resolutions that rendered me more calm and tranquil. I laid a scheme for my behaviour to Valville; and fixed upon what method I should make use of to discover his infidelity to his mother: in a word, I proposed to act with a spirit, a modesty, a decency, worthy of that Marianne who had been so highly esteemed. In fine, to behave with a conduct which, in my opinion, would be more proper to make Valville regret his forsaking me, if he had any generosity left, than all the tears I could shed; which often only serve to degrade us even in the opinion of the lover we lament, and at least spread an air of disgrace over our charms. Thus enthusiastically enchanted with my little generous plan, I insensibly sunk to rest, and did not awake till late the next morning; but then I awoke only to renew my sighs.

However industriously we endeavour to encourage ourselves in a situation like mine, we are continually liable to relapses, and that little repose we procure is too uncertain to be of long continuance: the soul only enjoys itself for a moment, and is sensible that its tranquillity depends upon a flight of imagination, which it would willingly preserve; but it constrains it too much; it is forced to retract itself into that condition which is most natural to it, that is, a state of agitation. This was my case.

case. I not only thought that Valville was unfaithful, but that his mother would no longer be mine; and that I should never possess that apartment she had shewn me at her house, which was so near to her's. She had promised me this in the tenderest manner: how delightful would have been my situation! I had anticipated my happiness by reflecting upon it before-hand, and had promised myself many sweet and pleasing interviews with her; but all my hopes were vanished, and the happiness I had depended on disappeared: how heavy, how severe, was this disappointment! Valville no longer intended this should ever come to pass. This was an article I did not think of the evening before. What would become of my mamma's picture which I had begged of her, and which she had assured me should be hung in my chamber, where it was placed, perhaps already; but, alas! to no purpose, since it was not for me. How numerous were my griefs! how swift did they flow in upon me!

Though I expected Mrs. De Valville would come that day, I did not hope to see her till the afternoon; but she was there in the morning. My friend the nun, who had paid me a visit soon after I was dressed, and whose conversation had again comforted me, had scarcely left the room, when I saw Miss Varthou enter: she appeared cast down, but less melancholy than the evening before. I gave her a reception which was neither cold nor very affectionate; I received her with a languishing look; and notwithstanding her friendly behaviour, and all she had told me, I felt some pain at seeing her: but, whether she perceived it or no, she seemed not to take any notice of it. 'I think I ought to acquaint you with one thing,' said she, with an open countenance, in which there appeared a visible concern; 'and that is, that I have been with Mr. De Valville.' She stopped here as if ashamed of what she had told me. This surprising beginning made me sigh. 'I readily believe it!' replied I, filled with the utmost consternation. 'But pray, do not condemn me without hearing me,' rejoined she immediately. 'I have assured you that I would never see him more, and that was my intention; but I had not the least suspicion that it was he who waited for me in the parlour.' (And this, in-

deed, was true, as I heard since.) 'I was told that one desired to speak with me from Mrs. De Valville,' continued she; 'and you are sensible that my appearance could not be dispensed with: it would have been very rude and unkind to have refused going to her without a sufficient excuse; so that I was obliged to shew myself, though I did it with reluctance, and not till after some hesitation; and the uneasiness of my mind seemed to preface what was going to happen. Judge of my surprize, when I found Mr. De Valville in the parlour.'—'You then retired, did not you?' returned I with a weak and trembling voice. 'I had undoubtedly done so,' returned she, blushing; 'but I had no sooner seen him than I could not resist a natural impulse of indignation which seized me. Would not you have done so?'—'No,' said I; 'you would have shewn a greater resentment in retiring.'—'May be so,' returned she; 'but put yourself in my place, with the opinion I had of him.' The words 'I had,' made me tremble; it seemed an ill omen of what was following. "You are very bold, Sir," said I to him, "to come here to surprize me," continued she, "after the letter you wrote to me, which you could not have made me take without deceiving me: are you come now for an answer to it? If so, you shall not wait long for it: I assure you, Sir, both your visits and your letters offend me extremely. The little service you have done me does not entitle you to dispense with the regard you owed me, especially as you are under engagements to a young lady, whom you cannot forsake without being guilty of a base perfidiousness. It is she, Sir, you ought to visit here; and not me; who am not born to be the object of such an injurious, such a shameful intrigue!" This I was willing to say before I left him," added she; 'and was going to the door in order to leave him, without descending to hear what he had to say, when I heard him cry out—"Oh, Miss! you throw me into despair!" and this was uttered with such a loud and mournful voice, that I thought myself obliged to stop, to prevent his crying out a second time, and alarming the house, which would have in-

'troduced a very disagreeable scene.—
 'No, no!' said I, 'he would not have
 behaved so extravagantly; that pre-
 caution was entirely unnecessary.—
 'I beg your pardon,' returned she, a
 little confused; 'the servants, or any
 in the court, might have come at the
 noise, and have put me out of coun-
 tenance; so it was wiser to stay a little,
 for I did not think he would detain
 me long. "Well, Sir, what do you
 want with me?" said I, in the same
 haughty tone; "I do not desire to
 hear any thing that you can inform
 me of."—"Alas, Madam! I pro-
 test I have but one word to say to
 you; pray return," replied he with
 a bewildered look, and so much emo-
 tion, that it was impossible for me
 to proceed. "Well, Sir," said I,
 going back to him, "what would
 you say?"—"I came to tell you," re-
 turned he, "that my mother will be
 here between eleven and twelve; and
 designs to take you and Marianne
 home with her to dinner: she did not
 desire me to tell you of it, but I
 thought you would permit me to let
 you know it before-hand."—"You
 need not have given yourself that
 trouble, Sir," said I: "Mrs. De
 Valville does me a great deal of ho-
 nour; and I shall consider how I
 ought to behave. Is that all?"—
 'Why did you ask if that was all?'
 said I: 'would you never have done?
 would you listen to him for ever?'—
 'Dear Miss,' said she, 'how you mis-
 take me; it is quite the reverse: "is
 that all," signified only that he tired
 my patience; I only said so to get a
 pretence to leave him, for I was all the
 while afraid of his disordered looks;
 for one does not know what to do with
 persons that are so little masters of
 themselves. Then, assuring me that
 he would soon have done, he began a
 discourse which I was obliged to hear
 from the beginning to the end. It was
 a vindication of himself with regard
 to you, occasioned by my having men-
 tioned his perfidiousness. You may
 judge that his arguments could not
 persuade me to believe him as excuse-
 able as he thinks himself to be; but
 I must confess, that I do not find him
 quite so culpable as I before thought
 him.—'Ah, Miss!' cried I, (with-
 out lifting up my head, lest my looks
 should charge her with hypocrisy) 'is

he not quite so culpable? Do you say
 so, who despised him so much yester-
 day?'—"It is true, indeed," returned
 she, 'I did despise him; and thought
 him the basest and most unworthy of
 all mankind: nor do I now pretend
 to say that he is not at all to blame;
 I only think he is less so than I at
 first imagined. My friendship indu-
 ces me to tell you this, in order to
 diminish your affliction, by rendering
 his behaviour less shocking to you.
 You have looked upon him as a sickle
 and perfidious person, who suddenly
 changes without knowing why: but
 he is very far from it; it is sometime
 since he endeavoured to remove his
 passion, with which he reproached
 himself. This he told me almost with
 tears in his eyes; it was even before
 your illness; he thought to conquer
 it by loving another; he only wanted
 an object: he saw me; I did not dis-
 please him; he felt a slight preference,
 which he could not help giving me
 over the rest, and seized the opportu-
 nity of making himself happy. That
 is all.—'Oh, Miss!' said I, 'is
 this the comfort you would have me
 listen to? Is this the consolation
 you bring me?'—"Indeed, Miss, I
 thought it would be one," returned
 she: 'is it not more agreeable to you
 to think that it is not out of incon-
 stancy or want of love that he leaves
 you, but that he is forced to do it
 with reluctance, and only from mo-
 tives which appear to him to be rea-
 sonable; and which, if am not de-
 ceived, you will think so too, if you
 will permit me to repeat them to you,
 in order to take away the ill opinion
 you have entertained of him? Let us
 see now: you have related your his-
 tory to me, my dear Marianne; but
 there are a great many articles that
 you have but just touched upon, yet
 are extremely important, and may
 have been prejudicial to you. Val-
 ville, who loved you, did not atten-
 d to them while they were concealed;
 and he was much in the right. But
 your story has been blazed abroad,
 and those little particulars are known
 to every body: there are few like him
 or his mother; persons of generous
 sentiments are very scarce. The linen-
 draper, with whom you lived as a
 shop-maid; the good monk, who went
 to petition the assistance of one of Mr.

De Valville's relations; the convent where you went to beg to be received out of charity; the adventure of the linen-draper, who knew you again at a lady's called Mrs. De Fare; your being taken from thence; your appearing at the prime-minister's before so large a company; the insignificant young fellow that was designed to displace Valville; and a hundred other things; which, though they turned out, indeed, to your advantage, and prove that none was ever more amiable and engaging; yet are very mortifying, and degrade you, though very unjustly. All these things, I say, have been represented to Valville, who has given me an account of them. You cannot imagine all that has been said to him on this subject, or how much they condemn his mother, and tease him about his design of marrying you. His friends break off their acquaintance with him; his relations will see him no more, unless he will lay aside his project; and there are none even of the indifferent and unconcerned that do not laugh and jeer at him: in fine, he must bear the most mortifying things, and go through endless insults. I cannot repeat half of what they say to him. "What! a girl that has nothing!" say they; "a girl that does not know who she is! How can you have the face, Sir, to shew her to the world?"—"She has virtue."—"But are there no ladies of quality who have it too? Can nobody please you but your amiable orphan? She loves you, you will say; but what can she do better? Is that a love to be boasted of? Can you be sure, that she would have had any esteem for you, if she had been your equal? How do you know but her necessities may induce her to dissemble that passion, to draw you in, and keep you to herself? All these ideas, Sir, will one day come into your mind;" they add, with equal malice and stupidity; "and you will then be sensible of the indignity you are now offering yourself; and be at least obliged to leave your country, and go and hide yourself with your wife, to avoid the scorn you will bring up on yourself: but, wherever you go, do not hope to avoid the misfortune of hating her, and cursing the day when first you knew her."

Here I could contain myself no longer; I had been silent whilst she repeated to me all these mortifying, these humbling expressions; I had endured a recital of my miseries; and of what service could it have been to me to have vindicated myself, or to have given a loose to my complaints? It could not be doubted but she was ready to follow her inclinations; I saw that Valville had sufficiently justified himself in her opinion, that he had gained her over, and that she only sought to clear him in mine, that I might dispense with her promise of despising him. This I saw very plainly; and my reproaches would have been of no signification at all. But how cruel, how extremely barbarous was it to mention that hatred which they predicted Valville would have for me! How severe the reflection, that he would curse the day of our acquaintance! This pierced my heart, and tried my patience to the utmost. "Oh! this is too much, Miss! It is too much!" cried I. "He detest me! he curse the time when he first saw me! The thought is quite insupportable! Have you the courage to threaten me with it? to come and entertain me with such frightful ideas? Is this your boasted friendship? Is this the method you take to dissipate my uneasiness? Can you believe I do not understand you, and see into the bottom of your heart? Is it like a friend, to use me in this manner? Cannot you love him without taking away my life? You will have it that he is innocent; and would convince me of it. Well, Miss, I will confess that he is so; give him again your esteem. He is in the right; he ought to blush at having loved me. I grant that our marriage would cover him with all the reproach you have enumerated. Yes, I am nothing; the meanest creature upon earth is above me. I have subsisted hitherto only upon charity: they know it, and reproach me with it. I am sufficiently convinced that Valville ought to abandon me, and that he may do it without any impeachment of his honesty. But for you to threaten me with his hatred and his curses; me, who am dying; it is too much; I cannot bear it; and God will revenge your inhumanity to me! You might have justified Valville, and have insinuated that his passion for you is not

‘not at all blameable, without coming to crush me under these barbarous prefages. It may be you, perhaps, that he will hate; it will perhaps be yourself, and not me, Miss: take care.’

This reproach perfectly stunned her: she did not expect that I should so readily find out her artifice; and I saw her blush and turn pale successively. ‘You put a very ill construction upon my intentions,’ returned she, with a troubled air. ‘What wild transports! I crush you! I pierce your heart! and God will revenge my inhumanity! How very strange is all this! Why should he punish me, Miss? Have I any share in your misfortunes? Am I responsible for the ideas people inspire this gentleman with? Is it my fault if they strike him? Is it any wonder that they make an impression upon him? However, I must say again, there is less infidelity than weakness in his change; and it is impossible to judge otherwise. Those who talk to him thus are more to blame than he: he is not perfidious, but only ill advised. I thought I should please you in telling you this, and that was all the artifice I have made use of. I wish he had resisted all that has been said to him, he would then have been more worthy of praise; but I cannot think that either you or I have a right to despise him for it. Every body will excuse his fault; nor will it make him sink in the esteem of any one. This is my opinion; and, if you are equitable, it must be yours too: your own peace and tranquillity require it.’—‘I should be more easy if this conversation was dropped,’ said I, weeping. ‘As you please,’ returned she. ‘I will say no more: and, I assure you, I shall never resume it. Fare you well, Miss,’ added she, retiring. I made no reply, only bowed my head, and let her go.

You will, perhaps, be apt to imagine, Madam, that I am now going to abandon myself to a greater excess of grief than ever: at least, you must see that I have a new acquisition of painful, uneasy circumstances. False as Valville was, I could not absolutely say, before this discourse, that I had a rival: it is true, he loved Miss Varthon; but yet she did not seem to be at all the less my friend; she despised him,

and persuaded me to do so too; this was far from acting like a true rival; but now she was a most compleat one. They mutually loved each other; and her discourse told me what an impression he had made on her heart; and that she had taken a resolution to cherish her growing passion. Must not this, according to all appearance, renew my despair, and plunge me into the most cruel, the most bitter affliction? But, so far from it, she had no sooner left the room, than my tears began insensibly to cease. This new augmentation of sorrow stopped them, and made me unable to shed any more. When a misfortune, which we have believed to be extreme, becomes still greater, the soul seems to lay aside its sorrow; it collects all its strength, to enable it to bear up courageously; its excess brings it to reason; it would be to no purpose to afflict itself; and therefore it yields, and is silent; it has no other choice left: and this I took even unknown to myself. It was with this kind of coolness that I peacefully contemplated my misfortunes; became convinced that there was no remedy, and consented to endure this unhappy adventure with patience. Thus my troubles terminated in a profound melancholy; I was peaceful and tractable: a state less cruel than that of absolute despair.

I was in this situation of mind, when a lay-sister told me Mrs. De Valville was come, and a person waited for me in the parlour: I imagined it was she that was there; and, notwithstanding the calm I was just in, I went down a little moved, and my eyes grew moist in the way. ‘That dear, that tender, mother,’ said I to myself, ‘thinks she comes to see her daughter: she does not know that she will only see the poor Marianne, stripped of that affectionate, that charming appellation her goodness would bestow upon me.’ I resolved, however, not to inform her of any thing yet: I had my reason for concealing it, and intended to wait for a more favourable moment. I dried my eyes at the parlour-door, endeavoured to assume a serene countenance; and, after two or three sighs, I entered. A curtain drawn before the grate hid from me still the person I was going to see; but, prepossessed with the opinion that Mrs. De Valville was behind it—‘Ah, my dear mamma!’ cried

I, as

I, as I advanced towards it; 'is it you that are come to see me?' when, drawing the curtain, I was ready to tear it for presenting, instead of Mrs. De Valville, her unfaithful son. I started; and was so struck with the sight, that I stood some time with my head hanging down, stunned, and without the power to speak a single word. 'What is the matter, my charming Marianne?' said he. 'It is me: did they not tell you so? How ravished am I to see you! Alas! you seem to be very weak still. My mother is in the parlour next this, with Mrs. Dorstin, talking with a nun; and she desired me to tell you that she would be here in a moment, and that she designs to take you and your friend Miss Varthon with her: but I am very much afraid that you are not yet in a condition to go out; think of it, however. Will not you go and dress you?'—'No, Sir,' said I, recovering my spirits; 'no, I will not dress me; I am not perfectly well; and Mrs. De Valville will give me leave to remain as I am.'—'O without doubt,' replied he. 'Well, you have given us terrible alarms,' added he immediately, with the tone of a man who would shew some concern, and who would speak, though he had nothing to say. 'Pray, how do you do? I do not know whether I am deceived or not, but you appear very much dejected; perhaps your illness has given you that thoughtful melancholy air; for I hope nothing has disturbed you.'

I easily perceived that he said this because my sadness and reserved behaviour alarmed him. He did not know Miss Varthon had revealed his secret to me; for she had concealed from him all that passed between us on that subject, and had persuaded him to believe that she had only learned our engagements from the friendly confidence I reposed in her: but the guilty are always suspicious; Miss Varthon, by some imprudent word, might have given me some light; and this was what he feared. Hitherto I had not dared to look in his face. I did not care that he should read in my eyes, that I too well knew every thing; and apprehended that I should not be able to dissemble with him. At last I thought I might trust myself, and looked up. 'When a per-

son is recovered from an illness so

'great as mine,' returned I, observing how he looked at me, 'our weakness gives us an air of melancholy.'

Ah, Madam! how difficult is it to commit a perfidious action with an unmoved countenance! The soul must be extremely tender of its honour, and have a strong propensity to truth, since it is so difficult to surmount the confusion it feels at being false. Valville could not meet my looks, notwithstanding all the assurance he endeavoured to put on. I could hardly know him again; he did not seem to be the same man; he had no longer that frankness, that openness of countenance, that joy at seeing me, which always used to sparkle in his eyes, and express the tender sentiments with which I inspired him. Love was banished from thence, and nothing remained but embarrassment and imposture: I saw nothing now but a visage cold and constrained, which he strove to enlighten, and to conceal the indifference that, in spite of all his endeavours, was very visible. Alas, Madam! such a sight was insupportable to me; I was obliged to cast down my eyes, and not to look upon him again. Here a deep sigh escaped me, which it would have been impossible to have concealed, which he took notice of with the appearance of some concern. 'Have you any difficulty of breathing, Marianne?' said he. 'No,' returned I; 'I am only very weak.' And then followed a long interval without either of us speaking a word, which happened more than once. These pauses had something very singular in them; they had been entirely unknown in our former interviews; and the more they disconcerted my unfaithful lover, the more frequent they became. For my part, I could only prevail on myself to be silent, and not to explain the subject of my disorder; which I could neither conceal, nor put any restraint upon my looks and behaviour. 'Your languishing condition makes me very uneasy,' said he: 'we have been assured that you were much better recovered. Do you take any recreation in your convent? You have some friends there.'—'Yes,' returned I; 'I have a nun who sincerely loves me: and then I see Miss Varthon, who is a most amiable lady.'—'She appears to be so,' he replied; 'but you are a better judge of that than I.'

—'Does

—‘Does she know,’ said I, ‘that Mrs. De Valville is come for her?’—
 ‘Yes, I think my mother desired she should be told of it,’ returned he.
 ‘You would be glad to be better acquainted with her,’ said I. ‘Why, I have seen her here once or twice; my mother desired me to call upon her to enquire after your health,’ cried he. ‘Did not you know it? She should have told you of it.’—‘Yes,’ replied I; ‘she mentioned it to me.’ And then we were silent again; he out of confusion, and I from discretion and melancholy. ‘But come, endeavour, Miss, to recover,’ said he: ‘I think I hear my mother in the court; I will see if I am not mistaken,’ added he, going to the window. This action spared him some words, which he would have been obliged to speak to keep up the conversation; at least, it entitled him to mention what he saw, or did not see in the court. ‘Yes,’ cried he; ‘it is she herself, with Mrs. Dorfin: they will be here in a moment; and I will go and open the door.’ He left me without saying any more; and went down some of the stairs to give Mrs. Dorfin his hand. He was glad of a pretence to run from me: whilst I, as soon as he was gone, endeavoured to smother my sighs, and to assume a countenance as serene and undisturbed as possible.

‘My dear child,’ said Mrs. Dorfin as she entered, giving me her hand, ‘I thank Heaven for thy preservation. We had not come till the afternoon, but I told your mamma that you must dine with us, that we might have your company the longer.—Madam, she is a great deal better than I feared,’ added she, addressing herself to Mrs. De Valville; ‘she is wonderfully recovered; and, I think, is not much altered. I do not remember what answer she made her. Valville stood by Mrs. Dorfin, and smiled at looking on me; as if he, too, found a great deal of pleasure at seeing me again.’ ‘My dear daughter,’ said Mrs. De Valville, ‘thou art not dressed yet! I sent my son to tell thee I was coming for thee.’ This she said with the most affectionate air. At the name of daughter, I let fall some tears; and observed that Valville blushed; but I do not know why; except he was ashamed to see me moved to so little purpose, and

thought that the sweet and tender name of daughter would be at last of no signification. ‘Indeed your daughter loves you too much,’ cried Mrs. Dorfin, ‘for her present weakness: there is no need of these emotions, nor of that melting tenderness, which seizes her heart at seeing you; and, I am afraid, they will do her no good. Let her be perfectly recovered, and then she may weep for joy as much as she pleases; but let her indulge none of these soft-enings till then.—Come, Miss, endeavour to cheer up, and let us go, for it grows late.’—‘I stay for Miss Varthon,’ returned my mamma: ‘but as for thee, thou mayst go as thou art. Thou needs not take the trouble to dress now.’—‘Alas! notwithstanding the desire we have to take her with us, I tremble for fear she should come out too soon,’ said Valville; who, under a pretence of a concern for my health, probably had no other design but to furnish me with an excuse, which he hoped I should take hold of; but he was deceived. ‘No,’ said I, ‘I am not ill at all: and since this dear lady will dispense with my dress, I shall be charmed with the pleasure of going with her.’—‘What do you mean by lady?’ returned Mrs. De Valville, smiling. ‘Who dost thou speak of? Thy illness has rendered thee mighty grave. Call me, very respectfully, thy mamma.’—‘I can never have respect enough for you, Madam,’ returned I with a sigh, which I was unable to conceal. It did not escape Mrs. Dorfin; and confounded the uneasy, the guilty Valville; who was, with some reason, out of countenance. This sigh, joined to my respectful behaviour, seemed to proceed from some hidden cause. Mrs. Dorfin appeared to think so, and to take notice of Valville’s confusion, by the manner in which she observed us both. My mamma was going, perhaps, to make me some farther reply, when Miss Varthon entered in a negligent, but elegant dishabille. As she had foreseen that, notwithstanding my uneasiness, I might go with them to dinner, she had, without doubt, satisfied herself with dressing in this manner; which seemed to exclude all design of pleasing; and which she probably thought would leave me no room to accuse her with any such intention.

I imme-

I immediately guessed her motives for this apparent regard for me, and was not to be imposed upon by it. In these cases, a jealous and betrayed lover is quicker sighted than a beloved one. I at once saw that she was not sincere; and that, notwithstanding her negligence, she had not been willing to strip herself of any of her charms. I was dressed in the same manner as when I arose, and had only slipped on a very bad gown. I was so changed and thin, the fire of my eyes was almost extinguished, and had such a pale, sickly, and disturbed countenance, that I could not help being sensible of the disparity between us, and being mortified at appearing before her with such disadvantages, and thus contributing myself to justify Valville's infidelity. If a lover leaves us, and gives the preference to another, we are at least pleased to think him to blame for it; and to charge it to his inconstancy, and not our want of charms; and thus to flatter ourselves that he is guilty of injustice. What lesser comfort can be required? But yet, in this case, methought I could not charge Valville with it. And this thought made me repent my having engaged to dine with his mother; but I could not go back. However, there were some things which might be alledged in my favour: and my rival, upon recollection, had not such great cause for triumph. If she shone more than me, it was not because she was naturally more lovely; but it was owing only to her being in good health, and my having been ill. I might be excused if I then wanted my own charms; but she was obliged to have all hers. They saw how much she excelled me; but did not know how far I might exceed her when mine returned.

I need not repeat the compliments these ladies made her. It was time to go; and we both of us left the convent, stepped into the coach, and soon arrived at Mrs. De Valville's. 'I am afraid you are not perfectly recovered,' said my mamma, with an affectionate look, when we were at dinner: 'you appear to have a languid melancholy which does not at all please me.—Was she so in the convent, Miss?' added she, speaking to Miss Varthon, who blushed at her question. 'Yes, Madam,' returned she; 'she was pretty much the same. She has much ado to recover;

her illness has been long and violent; however, she is sometimes better.' Mrs. Dorfin said nothing; but did not cease examining Valville and me.

As we arose from table, the weather being very fine, it was proposed to take a walk on the terrace of the garden. The conversation was at first general; and then Miss Varthon was asked news of her mother: they talked of her voyage, her return, and her affairs. While they were on this subject, I pretended a curiosity to see a shady arbour at the end of the terrace. 'It appears to be very agreeably situated,' said I, to engage Valville to wait on me thither. 'No, no,' returned he; 'it is nothing uncommon.' But, as I arose up, he could not avoid following me, and leaving the rest of the company. 'I beg pardon, Sir,' said I to him, as we walked, 'for depriving you of a conversation in which you, perhaps, interest yourself; but I shall not detain you long.'—'Why, you jest!' said he. 'Do not you know the pleasure I take in being with you?' I made him no answer. We entered the arbour; whilst my heart suffered the most violent palpitatio; and I could not tell how to begin what I had to say to him. 'A-propos!' cried he. (You will judge if 'a-propos,' was a proper introduction to what he was going to mention.) 'Do you remember that I have been endeavouring to obtain a post?'—'Do I remember, Sir! Without doubt, I do,' returned I. 'It is that affair that has deferred our marriage.'—'Is it concluded, Sir; or will it soon be so?'—'Alas! no; there is nothing done yet,' he replied; 'we are hardly any forwarder than we were at first: my mother will, no doubt, mention it to you. There have arisen difficulties which have retarded the conclusion of it; and which, unhappily, may put it off much longer.' You must observe, Madam, that these were difficulties of his own procuring; and the result of an intrigue carried on between him and his friends, without Mrs. De Valville's knowledge; as will appear afterwards. 'There are creditors and heirs that oppose us,' continued he: 'we must bring them to an agreement; and, according to all appearance, we shall not be able to do it soon. I am extremely sorry for it, and prodigi-

ously uneasy,' added he, taking two or three steps to go out of the arbour. 'Stay a moment,' cried I: 'I am a little weary; let us sit down. Pray, Sir, tell me why these difficulties disturb you so much?'—'Cannot you guess?' replied he. 'It is because it retards our marriage. You must imagine that I should be very glad to have it concluded. I have had a design to desire my mother to compleat my happiness before I obtained my place; but, upon second thoughts, I found it more proper to defer it; to keep to her decision; and not to press her too much. Am not I in the right?'—'Oh! there is nothing to be feared from her,' returned I; 'it will never miscarry on her account.'—'No, I believe not,' replied he; 'nor on mine neither: I believe you are pretty sure of it. But that is no reason why these delays should not make me impatient: I wish, with all my heart, my mother had not put it off; she did not consult my love in it. I thought I ought to seize this opportunity to explain myself.'—'Pray, Sir, what love is it you are speaking of?' returned I, to enter upon the matter. 'What love!' cried he. 'What love should it be but mine, Miss? my affection for you. Is my love to you a new thing? And can you attribute to me those obstacles which prevent an union; which I desire much more than you do yourself?' Instead of a reply, I drew his letter to Miss Varthon out of my pocket, which you know she had left with me. As I gave it him open, he knew it at first. Judge, then, what was his confusion! It was quite inexplicable. It would have made any other but me pity him. However, he endeavoured to recover himself. 'Well, Miss; what paper is this? What would you have me do with it?' said he, taking it with a trembling hand. 'Ah!' added he, with a forced laugh, without knowing what he said; 'I see it is mine: it is my letter. I forgot to tell you of it: it is a trifle. You were sick; the conversation turned upon love; and the subject made me a little pleasant; that is all: I thought no more of it. Miss Varthon and I saw each other sometimes at the Marchioness of Kilnare's: every body knows that I have not made any se-

cret of it. As I could not see you, I was willing to amuse and divert myself, to pass away the time. But, now we are speaking of this marchioness, I must tell you that I should be glad to see you acquainted with her: she is a lady of merit.' I let him conclude this rambling discourse, which was void of sense and reason, and which perfectly expressed the disorder of his mind. I attended to it with silence, and my eyes cast down. When he had done—'Sir,' said I, without using any reproaches, or taking hold of any thing he had said, 'I must do Miss Varthon the justice to assure you, that you ought not to accuse her with having made a premeditated sacrifice of your letter: she gave it me in the sudden emotion of her mind; as she then just discovered that I had the vanity to think I was dear to you.'—'The vanity!' returned he, with a countenance perfectly disordered. 'Sure, Miss, there is no vanity in that!'—'Sir,' returned I, with a modest tone, 'pray, have the goodness to hear me make an end. Miss Varthon, to whom you paid a visit a few days ago, told me, as soon as she had left you, that you had been to pay her a visit, and to enquire how I did; without mentioning a word of the letter you had just given her. But yesterday, hearing that our marriage was agreed upon, she became quite stunned.'—'Hah! hah! stunned!' cried he. 'Why so? You surprize me! What is that to her?'—'I do not know that,' replied I: 'but, however, I took notice of it; asked her the reason; and pressed her to tell me; when she produced the letter, and gave it me.'—'Very good!' returned he: 'she was mighty welcome; it was not any thing very important. What signifies the letter? She knows I intended nothing by it; and that it was only a little piece of gallantry; and I did not desire her to conceal it from you.'—'You must excuse me, Sir; you forget yourself: you desired her not to shew it me in the letter itself,' replied I, in a gentle and friendly tone. 'But pray, let me conclude what I was going to say: I have desired this explanation for no other reason but that Miss Varthon (supposing she should love you, as, indeed, you have reason
to

‘to hope for) should have no reason to
 ‘accuse me of a jealousy which would
 ‘very ill become me.’—‘But what do
 ‘you mean with your explications and
 ‘jealousies?’ cried he. ‘What would
 ‘you say? Indeed, Miss Marianne, I
 ‘do not understand you: I do not, in-
 ‘deed!’—‘Pray, Sir, hear me,’ con-
 ‘tinued I; ‘and let me conclude. Who
 ‘is it that you thus debase yourself to
 ‘dissemble with? Have you forgot
 ‘who you are speaking to? Am I
 ‘not that Marianne, that poor, that
 ‘unfortunate Marianne, who owes
 ‘every thing to your family, and who
 ‘knows not what would have become
 ‘of her had not your bounty saved
 ‘her? Do I deserve that you should
 ‘give yourself the trouble to explain
 ‘and justify your conduct to me? No,
 ‘Sir; the time is short; and do not,
 ‘therefore, interrupt me: we must
 ‘agree upon something. You know
 ‘the dispositions of your own heart;
 ‘but must be sensible that Mrs. De
 ‘Valville is ignorant of them. She
 ‘believes you are still actuated by
 ‘those sentiments you lately enter-
 ‘tained in my favour: she honours me
 ‘with the most engaging, the most en-
 ‘dearing affection; she persuades her-
 ‘self that I shall soon be her daughter;
 ‘impatiently waits till I am so; and
 ‘may take the resolution to marry us,
 ‘before you have obtained your post;
 ‘and, since you have so lately pressed
 ‘her to it, may well imagine that her
 ‘desire to have it concluded will fill
 ‘you with the most pleasing transports.
 ‘Can you, then, suddenly go to her,
 ‘and acquaint her that you have en-
 ‘tirely banished me from your heart?
 ‘I know, Sir, Mrs. De Valville has a
 ‘mind full of truth and virtue; and,
 ‘without reckoning the grief a decla-
 ‘ration of this kind would give her,
 ‘such a surprize would, doubtless,
 ‘prejudice you in her esteem. We
 ‘must endeavour, then, to soften a
 ‘little this adventure, and render it
 ‘less shocking to her: a mother, like
 ‘her, deserves all the pains we can
 ‘take to prevent her uneasiness. I
 ‘should be extremely afflicted, should
 ‘I make you incur her displeasure.
 ‘Alas! who am I, that I should be
 ‘the subject of a quarrel between Mrs.
 ‘De Valville and you? I, I say, who
 ‘am obliged to you for great part of
 ‘her tenderness, and for many of the

‘benefits I have received from her.
 ‘You would then, indeed, curse the
 ‘day of your acquaintance with the
 ‘unhappy orphan: but this I shall use
 ‘all my endeavours to avoid. There-
 ‘fore, consider, Sir, how you would
 ‘have me behave; and what steps you
 ‘would wish me to take, to prevent the
 ‘uneasiness I am speaking of. I will
 ‘do every thing for you, except saying
 ‘that I do not love you; for that
 ‘would be far from being true: you
 ‘need only tell me what you would
 ‘have me do, and I will endeavour
 ‘cheerfully to obey you. And, be-
 ‘lieve me, Sir, it was only with an in-
 ‘tention of serving you, that I took
 ‘the liberty to draw you from a con-
 ‘versation which you thought more
 ‘engaging than mine.’

Hitherto Valville had stood his ground
 as well as he was able; and had the
 courage absolutely to deny his infidelity.
 The courage, did I say! I should ra-
 ther have called it a mean, a pitiful
 baseness, which would not suffer him
 generously to confess the situation of
 his heart. How painful must such a
 conduct be to a mind that was always
 inclined to virtue, and had ever the
 strongest propensity to truth! But what
 I had now told him made him unable
 to resist any longer; my generosity con-
 founded him, and made him sink be-
 fore me: he dissembled no longer; but
 confessed his shame without the least
 reserve. I did not seem to take notice
 of his confusion; but, as he still re-
 mained silent, I added—‘Be so good
 ‘as to give me an answer. What do
 ‘you prescribe to me?’—‘Do as you
 ‘please, Miss,’ returned he: ‘I am to
 ‘blame, and cannot vindicate myself.’
 —‘It is necessary, however, to advise
 ‘what I should say,’ added I, with a
 free and pressing air: but he continued
 mute; and it was impossible to get a
 word more from him. Here I observed
 Miss Varthon had left the two ladies,
 and was coming up to us. ‘Sir,’ said
 I, ‘in the uncertainty in which you
 ‘leave me, as to the part I ought to
 ‘take, I shall act with as much dis-
 ‘cretion as possible; and it shall not be
 ‘my fault if this affair does not suc-
 ‘ceed according to your desires.’

As he continued still silent, and I
 was going to leave him, Miss Varthon,
 who was already at the entrance of the
 arbour, pretended to be surprized at

finding us there; and seemed as if unwilling to interrupt us. 'I beg pardon,' said she, retiring; 'I did not think you had been there still: indeed I imagined you were walking in the garden.'—'You are very welcome to come in, Miss,' said I; 'our conversation is finished, and you might have had your share in it.—This gentleman is witness that there has been nothing said against you.'—'What do you mean by against me?' returned she, 'Indeed, Miss, I do not doubt it. What connection is there between your secrets and my affairs?' I made no reply; and went out of the arbour to meet the ladies, who were coming up to us; so that our two lovers could only remain a moment together. I do not know what they said, but I heard them soon follow me: and, as I listened, methought Miss Varthon was talking very low to Valville. For my part, I returned from this expedition with a pleasing kind of emotion: that dignity of sentiment I had shewn to my unfaithful lover; that shame and humility I left in his heart; that astonishment he was in at my generous behaviour; in short, that superiority which my mind had assumed over his; a superiority more tender than displeasing; more amiable than vain; filled my soul with the sweetest and most flattering sentiments; and I found myself too worthy of his esteem not to be regretted. 'Sure,' said I, 'it is impossible for him to love Miss Varthon with the same tranquillity he would before have done.' I desired him to forget me, and be at peace with himself. I resolved to punish him by seeing him no more: and then I imagined that his affliction would be superior to mine, as he alone was guilty. 'Ah! why was he unfaithful?' These were the thoughts which employed my mind as I advanced towards Mrs. De Valville: and you cannot imagine how greatly I was delighted with them, or how much they allayed my grief. Revenge is, in some degree, sweet to every offended heart; and nothing but that can assuage its pain. Some will have a cruel, and others a generous one: and mine, you see, was of the last sort; for I wished my dear Valville no greater evil than to regret his forsaking me. I have already told you that Miss

Varthon and he followed me; and we presently joined the other ladies: when, a cold and troublesome breeze arising, Mrs. De Valville proposed our walking in. I perceived Mrs. Dorfin, who had the goodness to interest herself in my concerns, and who had entertained some suspicions of what had happened, had watched all our actions. I observed, that she fixed her eyes on Valville, who turned away his head: his countenance had still an impression of the several emotions of his mind, which he was not yet able to disguise. Mrs. De Valville herself, who suspected nothing, discovered so much disorder in his looks, that, coming up to me—'Daughter,' said she, lowering her voice, 'Valville seems melancholy and thoughtful: pray, what has passed between you? What hast thou said to him?'—'Nothing, Madam,' I replied, 'that he ought not to be very well satisfied with.'—'I will soon make his gaiety return, I am determined,' said she, without explaining herself any farther; and then we went in. As soon as we had taken our seats—'My dear,' said Mrs. De Valville, 'as Miss Varthon is your friend, we may talk freely before her of the marriage which is agreed upon between my son and you: and I hope she will even do us the honour to be present at it; and therefore I shall make no difficulty of speaking my mind before her.' Here this young lady coloured; she foresaw that a scene was opening in which she herself might be involved: however, she bowed to Mrs. De Valville, to thank her for the confidence she reposed in her. 'You are thinking of your post, son,' continued the latter: 'I had made a resolution not to marry you till you had obtained it; but I did not foresee that you would meet with so many difficulties to obstruct your designs; but since they seem to have no end; since we cannot tell when you will get over them; and since they trouble you so much; we need only overlook them, and conclude your marriage; with this single precaution, to keep it secret for some time. I have taken measures accordingly, unknown to you; and three or four days will be sufficient to prepare for it. We shall set out this evening for the country.'—'This lady,' added she, turning as

Mrs.

Mrs. Dorlin, 'has promised to give us her company: Miss will be so kind, as to do the same; and all will be over in a few days.'

Here Valville fell again into all that distress and confusion into which I had cast him a few moments before. Miss Varthon blushed, and knew not what countenance to assume. For my part, I held my peace, and had the air of one more melancholy than pleased: but there was no malice nor ill-nature in my silence. My tenderness and regard for Mrs. De Valville, and, perhaps, my love too for her son, tied up my tongue, and made me unable to make her any answer. Here a short interval passed, during which neither Valville nor I could open our mouths. At last, he broke silence; but it was rather to utter a few insignificant, trifling words, than to make any reply; for he was entirely undetermined, and knew not what he was going to say: but he could not avoid saying something to fill up that surprising vacancy in the conversation occasioned by our silence. 'Yes, indeed, it is true! You are in the right—nothing is more easy—Yes; in the country—when—ever you please—We shall see——' 'How! what do you say? We shall see!' cried Mrs. De Valville, in an amaze. 'Are you absent? Did you hear what I said? What shall we see? Why, is not every thing seen already?' 'No, Madam!' returned I, with a sigh; 'not your goodness, your love to me, shuts your eyes against those reasons which ought absolutely to break off this marriage: and I conjure you, by the favours with which you have loaded me; by that eternal gratitude I have for them; by all your concern for the happiness of your son; not to press him any more on this subject; but to abandon your project!'—'Why so, hussy!' cried she, in an angry tone; for she was ready to call me names: she was provoked out of mere tenderness. 'Why so, pray? What do you mean?'—'Oh, mamma! you ought to think no more of it,' cried I, throwing myself suddenly at her feet. 'I lose riches, and honours; but I cannot help it; they are not fit for me: Mr. De Valville cannot share them with me, without rendering me the ridicule of the world; without

passing himself for a man of a mean and base spirit. Alas! what a misfortune would it be to this young gentleman, who is the hope of an illustrious family, who might aspire to the greatest honours, to be obliged, perhaps, to desert his country for having married a girl whom nobody knows; a girl whom you have raised from nothing; and who has no other fortune but your charity! Could the world ever approve of such a marriage?'—'But what do you mean by these reflections? What are you about?' cried Mrs. De Valville, interrupting me. 'Pray, Madam, hear me,' resumed I in a pressing and importunate tone: 'if any thing is worthy your concern and his, it is certainly my misery. My dear mamma, you have hitherto had the greatest regard for me, and still continue it: you would have the poor Mari- anne call you mother; you do her the honour to call her your child, and treat her as if she was so. How admirable, how kind, is this! Can any thing equal your goodness? And is not my low, my indigent condition, sufficiently honoured, but you must carry your charity so far as to marry me to your son? Is my misery to be esteemed a portion? No, my dear mother; no! you may give me the endearing title of your daughter as long as you please; you may bestow it upon me without controul; but I ought not to receive it from the law. It is true, I had yielded to your excessive goodness; I thought I had surmounted all obstacles, and every thing would pass on smooth and easy: the excess of my happiness prevented my thinking, and had taken away all my scruples; but they return upon me, and I can no longer hide from myself the true state of things. Every body cries out against our marriage. Mr. De Valville is affronted, railled, and persecuted, wherever he goes, though he conceals it from me, and dares not tell it you; he is shocked at the frightful prospect; and has reason to be so: but, though he should regard all this with indifference, and endeavour to overlook it, I ought to mind it for my own sake, as well as his. In short, you love me; your intention is to secure my happiness; and yet I should disappoint all the designs

'designs of your tenderness by consenting to marry him; designs which I ought to revere, and which deserve to meet with success. How can I be happy if he is not so too? if I see myself hated and despised, as they foresee I must be? Lord! I be hated——!'

Here I was stopped by a torrent of tears. Valville, who, during my discourse, had appeared as if he was going to interrupt me, as soon as I had finished, arose suddenly with an air of the most violent agitation, and went out of the hall without any body desiring him to stay, or asking the reason of his going. Mrs. De Valville continued immovable; Mrs. Dorfin appeared dull and pensive, and fixed her eyes on the floor. Miss Varthon, more uneasy than ever at what she feared I should say, endeavoured to assume a countenance that might not betray her: so that we were all of us, from different motives, unable to speak. As for me, weakened by this violent effort, I let myself sink upon Mrs. De Valville's knee, and continued crying. The two ladies were for some time speechless after Mr. De Valville was gone. 'Daughter,' said my mamma, at last with an air of consternation, 'does my son love you no more?' I only answered her by a fresh flood of tears, with which she mingled hers; and a look that made her sensible she had discovered the cause of my uneasiness. Mrs. Dorfin seemed extremely moved, and wept too: Miss Varthon sighed a little; and this was for some time the tone of our conversation. This was succeeded by a perfect silence: but Mrs. De Valville, at last, bursting afresh into tears, took me in her arms, and moved me so much by her tenderness and affection, that I was unable to contain myself, or to support the weight of my own sorrow; and was therefore placed in an easy chair. 'Come, my dear daughter,' said she; 'come, endeavour to comfort yourself! Believe me, my dear, thou hast still a mother: dost thou esteem her as nothing?'—'Alas! it is she I regret,' returned I, with a voice interrupted with sighs. 'Ah! why dost thou regret her?' returned she. 'She is, if possible, more thy mother than ever!'—'And I a thousand times more her friend!' returned Mrs. Dorfin, in a resolute voice,

but with her eyes full of tears. 'And, indeed, it is not her that I pity; it is Mr. De Valville: his loss is infinitely greater than hers.'—'Now I have done with him; I shall never esteem him any more,' returned my dear mamma. 'But, Marianne, how didst thou learn that he loves another?' added she. 'Who gave thee that information? he could not tell it thee himself? Do you know the person for whom he thus breaks through his engagements? Who is it that he can think worthy of being preferred before thee? Can she hope to retain him? Tell me, hast thou heard who she is?'—'You will know, without doubt, Madam; he ought to tell you that himself,' returned I: 'I beg you would excuse me from telling you any more.'—'Miss,' resumed Mrs. De Valville, addressing herself to my rival; 'my daughter is your friend; and, I am persuaded, has told it you: it is likely she has trusted you with the whole. Is she not mistaken? Is there any proof that he is really unfaithful? I have sometimes sent Valville to your convent; is it there that he became enamoured? and was inspired with this new, this strange passion?'

In the situation Miss Varthon was in, she must have been older and more conversant with the world than she was, to have been proof against a question of this nature: she was at once unable to keep her countenance, and blushed in such a remarkable manner, that the two ladies were immediately satisfied that she was the person. 'I understand you, Miss,' said Mrs. De Valville: 'you are, indeed, extremely amiable; but, after what has happened to my daughter, I cannot advise you to depend much on the heart of my son.'—'I did not expect either your comparison or advice, Madam,' returned Miss Varthon, with a haughtiness that recovered her from her embarrassment. 'As to your son, all I think of his love is, that it offends me; and I should have imagined that you must have thought so too. But it is very late, Madam, and time to return to the convent; will you be so good as to send me back?'

'I shall wait upon you thither myself, Miss,' said Mrs. De Valville: and then, turning to Mrs. Dorfin, 'you will

‘ will not leave us so soon?’ added she. ‘ I am going to order the horses to be set to the coach; and shall return in a quarter of an hour, and expect to find you here with Marianne.’— ‘ With all my heart, Madam,’ said Mrs. Dorfin. ‘ My dear mamma,’ cried I, with a voice still very faint, ‘ I never knew a greater pleasure than being with you; it will always be my happiness; and I shall now never wish to enjoy any other: but Mr. De Valville will return to-night; and, if you would not have me lose my life, do not expose me again to the pain of seeing him, at least so soon. You would be sorry for detaining me, since it could only cause you uneasiness. I know, mamma, how sincerely you love me; and it is your affection, your tender heart, I would spare. You must believe what I say now is very true; since, by warning you, I deprive myself of all that consolation which I should find in being with you: but, when Mr. De Valville shall be married, I shall find no other charm in life but the pleasure of being with my dear mamma.’— ‘ She is in the right,’ returned Mrs. Dorfin, while Mrs. De Valville was drying her eyes. ‘ This adventure is too fresh; let us carry her back to her convent.’ On which the latter went to give her orders; and we went soon after. Never, perhaps, were four people together more serious and silent than we were; for scarce were four words spoke in the way from my mamma’s to the convent. It is true, the situation Miss Varthon and I were in could not allow of a very brisk conversation: nothing was lively amongst us, but my glances at Mrs. De Valville, and hers at me. At last we arrived. My rival stepped out of the coach first; Mrs. De Valville and I followed; and Mrs. Dorfin, who loaded me with caresses, and assurances of friendship, staid behind. Miss Varthon, who longed to get rid of us, rang the bell, and returned her thanks to my mother in a cold, but polite manner; and, the gate being opened, she left us. I cast myself into Mrs. De Valville’s arms; where I remained some time speechless, and ready to faint. ‘ Hide thy tears,’ said she to me, whispering; ‘ it is with difficulty that I retain mine. Farewell! I think that thou shalt for ever be

‘ my daughter; and that thou possessest the first place in my heart. I will come to see thee again to-morrow.’ This she said with the most dejected countenance. After this, I entered, with my soul more softened than afflicted; and, indeed, I had reason to be so. I left Mrs. De Valville oppressed with grief; Mrs. Dorfin had just affectionately embraced me, with tears in her eyes; my unfaithful lover was troubled himself, and had given us a sufficient proof of it, by leaving us so abruptly. Thus my adventure had moved three persons who were infinitely dear to me: my affairs became theirs; and this was a pleasing subject of consolation. I did not appear destitute of help: their tears honoured mine; they were sorry for my affliction; grieved for what I grieved; and sympathized in all my sorrow. These ideas were extremely sweet, and made me weep less from any real uneasiness, than from the most pleasing sentiments of tenderness and gratitude. But to proceed.

I passed the rest of the evening with my friend the nun. You will easily conceive that I did not see Miss Varthon; and that the friendly commerce which had been begun between us was entirely broken: however, she thought that the discretion I had made use of in concealing her share in my adventure, deserved some acknowledgment. At nine o’clock the next morning, a lay-sister brought me a letter from her. I opened it, a little uneasy at what might be the contents; but it contained only a compliment upon my proceedings the day before: and, as near as I can remember, it was as follows—

‘ MISS,
‘ WHAT you did for me yesterday was so very obliging, that I should reproach myself if I did not return you my sincerest thanks for it. It was not your fault that the share I had in your grief did not remain a secret; for, notwithstanding the extreme trouble and disorder of your mind, you did not let a word escape you, that could in the least expose me. A very generous proceeding, indeed! and such as none but you could have been capable of. The result of this adventure will shew you how much I am touched with it. Adieu Miss,’ &c.

You

You will soon see what this proof was that she engaged herself to give me. I returned her an answer by the same lay-sister; which was very short, and was as follows—

I Am obliged to you, Miss, for your compliment: but you owe me none; I do not think I deserve any praise for not being ill-natured. I acted only according to my own character; and expect no reward for it.

Mrs. De Valville had promised me, the evening before, that she would come and see me; and she was as good as her word. We spoke of Miss Varthion; and as all my engagements with Valville were broken, I made no difficulty of telling her in what manner I became acquainted with his infidelity; and I did it to the advantage of my rival, whose dispositions I could not then inform her of. My narration made us both weep; and the expressions of our mutual tenderness exceeded all description. She had no news to tell me from Valville, for he had not shewn himself since the moment he left us. However, he returned home, but not till it was very late, and that morning he set out either for the country or Versailles. Doubtless, said she, he avoids seeing me; and, I am persuaded, is ashamed to appear before me. On this she got up, and was going to leave me, when Miss Varthion, whom neither of us expected to see, suddenly came in. I intended to write to you, Madam, said she to my mother, after saluting her; but since you are here, and I may have the honour to speak to you, it is better, I think, to let it alone, and tell you my mind, without giving you or myself any farther trouble. I shall not detain you very long. Mr. De Valville is changed: you believe I am the cause; and I have reason to think so too. But how have I contributed to his inconstancy? This, Madam, it is necessary you should know. I should be sorry to have you deceived in an affair of such consequence; and shall therefore tell you the whole with the strictest truth. The first time Mr. De Valville saw me, was when I fainted away at parting from my mamma. You was so kind as to lend me your assistance; and he, too, endeavoured to bring me to my-

self. I entered the convent with this lady, whom I had but just known, and who became my friend: but she neither mentioned you, Madam, nor Mr. De Valville; nor told me upon what terms she was with him.—I know it, Miss, said my mother, interrupting her: Marianne has just told me every thing; and has done you all the justice that you could expect from her. My son came to pay you a visit; he presented my service to you; he gave you a letter as he left you, and told you it came from me: you could not divine; and any body else would have taken it. Besides, you made no secret of it; but gave it to this lady as soon as you knew she was interested in it: so I see no reason why you ought to disturb yourself. If my son found you amiable, and has presumed to tell you so, it is not your fault. You have no otherwise contributed to it than by having charms, which it is not in your power to divest yourself of; and you are quite out of the case, even according to the account Marianne gives of it.—This account is much to her honour; and I should not, perhaps, have been treated so gently by any body else, returned Miss Varthion, with the tears in her eyes, in spite of her endeavours to prevent them: and, what I have further to add is, to desire you to be so kind as to oblige Mr. De Valville to endeavour to see me no more. It would be to no purpose; and would only shew his want of regard to me.—You are in the right, Miss, returned my mother; he would be quite inexcusable; and I will let him know it. Not that I should not be the first to wish for an alliance like yours; which, to be sure, would do us a great deal of honour: but my son is unworthy of it; his inconstancy shocks me; and though he should be so happy as to please you, I should be afraid, in giving him to you, that I made you a very bad present. I will let him know how disagreeable his visits are to you; and I hope he will give you no reason to complain. Miss Varthion made no other reply, but a curtsey, and then retired.

She imagined, perhaps, that I should applaud the resolution she had taken to see him no more; and that I should look

look upon it as a proof of that acknowledgment she had promised me: but, far from it; I was not so easily deceived. This was only a pretended acknowledgment; but no proof at all of her gratitude. What could she risque by refusing to see Valville at the convent? Had she not the Marchioness of Kinnare's house for a resource? Was not Valville one of this lady's friends? Did not he frequently visit her there? All this shew of a noble generosity in her behaviour was only a vein of ostentation, which signified nothing; and you will see, in the sequel, that I then reasoned very justly. But, to return to myself.

I was born for a multiplicity of adventures, and my stars would not suffer me long to want them: I am now a little at leisure; but it will not last long. My mother continued to come and see me; but Valville, always absent, never came with her. Miss Varthon and I met in the convent; but we only gave each other a transient salute without speaking. About four or five days after our dining with Mrs. De Valville, I received, in the morning, a very extraordinary visit. But I must begin, Madam, by telling you what it was that procured it me. Mrs. Dorfin had been that morning to see Mrs. De Valville; she found there an old friend of the family, an officer, who was a person of quality, and a little advanced in years; he had heard much of me, on account of my adventure at the prime-minister's; and had never seen my mother, without asking news of Marianne, of whom he was continually making encomiums, founded on what he had heard of me. The noise of my disgrace was already abroad; and Valville's infidelity was publickly known. Perhaps he himself, since he had left his mother, had told it to some of his best friends, who had also trusted the secret to others. However, this gentleman had heard of it; and came to Mrs. De Valville's in order to be certainly informed of the truth. 'Madam,' said he, 'there is a report that Mr. De Valville is no longer in love with that amiable girl, who is so worthy of every one's esteem: they say he has left her, and refuses to marry her. How is it possible that he should cease loving that Marianne, who was so dear to him, and so worthy of being so? I can hardly believe it; and, probably, it is only a calum-

ny.'—'Alas, Sir! it is but too true,' returned Mrs. De Valville with an air of grief; 'and I am quite inconsolable.'—'Indeed,' returned he, 'you have reason to be so: it would have been the highest comfort to you to have been the mother of that engaging child; it would have been an acquisition that would have secured the repose of your life. What can Mr. De Valville mean? Is he afraid of being too happy?' I shall pass over the rest of their conversation on this subject. Mrs. De Valville was going to dine with Mrs. Dorfin; and this last lady engaged the officer to attend them; and added, that I must come too, on account of the extreme desire he expressed to see me. But as it was yet very early, the ladies did not care to go so soon; however, they thought I ought to be informed of it: 'I shall send,' said my mother, 'to her convent, to tell her that we shall take her with us in our way.'—'There is no need of sending,' replied the officer; 'I have a little business that way; and, if you will give me leave, I will wait upon her myself: only give me a short note for her, or else perhaps I may not be able to gain admission.' On which she wrote immediately—

'DEAR DAUGHTER,
'I Shall call upon thee at one o'clock,
'and take thee with me. We dine
'at Mrs. Dorfin's.'

With this short passport the officer arrived at the convent. He asked for me, from Mrs. De Valville; and I came down. Some of the boarders had told me they would that afternoon come to keep me company in my chamber; so that, notwithstanding my grief, I happened to be dressed less negligently than ordinary. These are little regards which do not seem to cost us the least reflection. It is true that my mind was dejected: but what then! my vanity did not subside; but still performed its office. It is necessary to repair, on one side, what our afflictions destroy on the other; for, in short, we are not willing to lose all.

I entered the parlour, and saw a man of about fifty; he had a good mien, and an air of distinction; was well dressed, though plain; and had a countenance extremely frank and open. Let

our natural politeness be ever so great, we no sooner see persons whose appearance prepossesses us in their favour, than we give them a reception peculiarly engaging. With the one we are only courteous and obliging; but, with the other, free and affable: and this disposition takes such a sudden possession of our minds, that we have scarcely time to take notice of it. This was the situation of my mind the moment I saw this gentleman: my looks of complacency were returned by his, which expressed the same regard; and he could not possibly have shewn a higher satisfaction. I waited till he spoke to me. 'Miss,' said he, after a low bow, and presenting me the note from my mother, 'Mrs. De Valville desired me to give you this. She wanted to send somebody with it; and I entreated her to give me the preference.'—'You do me a great deal of honour, Sir,' returned I, opening the note, which I soon read. 'Well, Sir,' added I, 'Mrs. De Valville shall find me ready; and I give you a thousand thanks for the trouble you have given yourself.'—'I ought to thank Mrs. De Valville for having permitted me to wait on you,' replied he: 'but, Miss, it is not late, and the ladies will not soon be here. May I, by the favour of the commission I have obtained, hope to enjoy a quarter of an hour's conversation with you? I have been a long time a friend to Mrs. De Valville and her family: I am to dine with you; so you may regard me beforehand as one of your acquaintance, since I shall be no stranger to you two hours hence.'—'As you please, Sir,' replied I, much surprized at his discourse. 'You may speak; I am ready to hear you.'—'I will not keep you long in suspense, Miss,' returned he, 'about what I have to say to you. I have the character of a man of honour; and a sincere, sociable, honest, plain-dealer: ever since I heard of your character, you have been the object of my esteem, my respect, my admiration! This, I assure you, Miss, is strictly true. I am informed of your affairs. Mr. De Valville, unhappily for himself, is guilty of inconstancy. I am my own master, Miss; enjoy an estate of twenty-five thousand livres a year; and I offer them to you: they shall

'be at your service whenever you please, after you have consulted with Mrs. De Valville upon it.' What most surprized me in this proposal, was the rapidity with which it was delivered, and the engaging frankness which accompanied every thing he said. I had seldom seen any body so worthy of being listened to as this agreeable gentleman: his soul seemed to speak to me; methought I saw it; it addressed itself to mine; and demanded an answer, as simple and natural as the question it had proposed to me. Therefore, laying aside all ceremony, I conformed myself to his behaviour; and, without trifling away any time in returning him thanks, I asked him if he knew my history. 'Yes, I do, Miss,' returned he; 'and that is the reason why you see me here: it is that which has told me you are more valuable than all the world possesses besides; and it is that which has attached me to you.'—'You surprize me, Sir!' returned I: 'your manner of thinking is very rare. I do not know how to praise it, because it is too much to my advantage. To all appearance, you are a person of quality.'—'Yes,' returned he; 'I forgot to mention that: but it is not, in my opinion, a thing very material. It is the honest man, and not barely the man of quality, who can merit you, Miss: and, as I think myself as honest as any other person, I imagined this qualification, joined to an estate, which is more than enough to satisfy our desires, and make us easy, might induce you to accept of my offers.'—'I ought not to hesitate,' returned I, 'upon the value I ought to set upon your proposal, which is a mark of the highest esteem, and the greatest generosity: but permit me to repeat my question; Have you well considered it? I have nothing; I do not know to whom I owe my birth; I have subsisted from my cradle only on the charity of strangers; and have many times been in danger of becoming an object of publick charity. This has shocked Mr. De Valville, notwithstanding the inclination he had for me. Take care, Sir!—'It is the worse for him, Miss,' returned he; 'this will never be looked upon as the most glorious part of his conduct: however, you will have nothing like this

' this to fear from me. Mr. De Val-
 ' ville loved you: but it was not that
 ' passion which brought me hither; I
 ' heard you represented as most perfect-
 ' ly lovely; but we are not apt to be
 ' affected by charms we have never
 ' seen, and know only by relation. So
 ' it is not a lover that comes to see you;
 ' it is much better. Is a person of
 ' your merit fit to be made the sport of
 ' a foolish and inconstant passion? No,
 ' Miss! no! Let people fall in love
 ' with you the first moment they see
 ' you; let them love you with the ten-
 ' derest affection: how can they avoid
 ' it? I feel the same passion; and I
 ' find that I am actually in love; but
 ' I need not that to be charmed with
 ' you; the amiable qualities of your
 ' mind have been able to attract my
 ' highest esteem: your beauty, indeed,
 ' is an additional qualification; which,
 ' though not necessary to engage my
 ' regards, which were before founded
 ' on a more solid basis, yet I cannot
 ' be offended at it, because the excess
 ' of that happiness I would enjoy,
 ' cannot be supposed to extirpate my
 ' desire of obtaining it. It was my
 ' reason that made me give you my
 ' heart; and I brought no other passion
 ' with me. Thus my affection does
 ' not depend upon a transport which is
 ' liable to wear off, and subject to
 ' change. My reason is not concerned
 ' about a fortune, since I have enough
 ' for us both; nor about your rela-
 ' tions, since they would be nothing to
 ' me. I am not concerned about
 ' your family; for, if you were of
 ' royal extraction, would it add any
 ' thing to your personal merit? Besides,
 ' have souls any relations? Are they
 ' not all derived from the same original?
 ' It is your mind, then, I would ob-
 ' tain; it is your virtue alone that has
 ' the most powerful charms; which I
 ' can never possess without being oblig-
 ' ed to make you all possible returns.
 ' Should you consent to marry me, I
 ' should esteem myself infinitely obliged
 ' to you. My love is too excessive for
 ' me to dare to desire you to return it
 ' in the same degree. You are hardly
 ' twenty; and I am almost fifty: and
 ' you would think me very weak was
 ' I to desire you to love me. But as to
 ' your friendship and esteem, I must
 ' hope to attain them both; as I shall
 ' endeavour to deserve them. As you

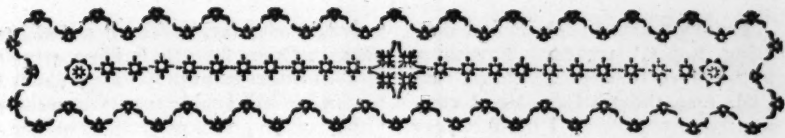
' are reasonable and generous, I flatter
 ' myself with success. This is what
 ' I had to say to you, Miss: I now
 ' only wait to know what is your de-
 ' termination.'—' Sir,' said I, ' if I
 ' only consulted the honour you would
 ' do me in my present situation, and
 ' the good opinion you give me of your-
 ' self, I should immediately accept of
 ' your proposal; but I must desire eight
 ' days time to consider of it, both for
 ' your sake and mine. I shall think
 ' for you, because you would marry a
 ' person who is nothing, and has not
 ' any thing to recommend her: and the
 ' same reasons will induce me to con-
 ' sider it well on my own account, be-
 ' cause they equally regard us both.
 ' Let me entreat you, Sir, to employ this
 ' time in examining these things more
 ' closely than you have done, and with
 ' all the attention you are capable of.
 ' You esteem me, you say, very highly;
 ' and your present disposition makes
 ' you set this above all other consid-
 ' erations. But I am not yet yours,
 ' Sir: and we should be no sooner mar-
 ' ried, but your conduct would be cen-
 ' sured; you would be railled on my
 ' unknown extraction, and want of
 ' fortune. Can you be insensible and
 ' unconcerned at their banters and re-
 ' proaches? Will you not be sorry for
 ' having allied yourself to no family;
 ' and for not increasing your fortune
 ' by your marriage? These things you
 ' ought to consider of maturely; as I
 ' shall reflect what would be the con-
 ' sequence, should you repent of your
 ' precipitation. But though these mo-
 ' tives of reflection should not keep me
 ' in suspense, I cannot have the liberty
 ' of giving you the proof you desire of
 ' my gratitude, without Mrs. De Val-
 ' ville's consent. I am her daughter;
 ' nay, more than her daughter; for it
 ' is to her goodness alone, and not to
 ' nature, that I owe the blessing of hav-
 ' ing her for my mother. Her gene-
 ' rosity, her noble, her boundless ge-
 ' nerosity, made her assume that title,
 ' and indulge the most tender care and
 ' affection for me; so that I am bound
 ' to be entirely at her disposal: and
 ' I am persuaded you will think I have
 ' reason to be so. I must therefore,
 ' Sir, acquaint her with your offers;
 ' which I shall do without telling her
 ' your name, unless you permit me to
 ' do it.'—' O just as you please,
 ' Miss!

‘ Miss!’ returned he; ‘ I shall take so little care to keep it secret, that I shall take a pride in publishing my design; and I am sure that all men of sense will esteem me the better for it, even though you should refuse me. But it is time I should leave you; the ladies will be here in an hour at farthest; and I shall wait for you at Mrs. Dorfin’s. Farewel, Miss; I shall make reflections, since you desire it; but I shall not be in pain about those which may be made upon me; yours alone are capable of disturbing me. This day se’nnight, about this time, I shall be here again, to know the result of them and Mrs. De Valville’s sentiments; which, perhaps, may be in my favour.’

This said, he retired; and I made him no other answer but a curtsey, which was accompanied with an air of the greatest affability and gratitude. I then immediately went up into my room, and made haste to dress me. The ladies soon arrived: I stepped into the coach; dined at Mrs. Dorfin’s; and returned home very late, without having mentioned my adventure with the officer to Mrs. De Valville. ‘ Shall I see you again soon, mamma?’ said I to her. ‘ I shall come again to-morrow in the afternoon,’ returned she, embracing me; and then we parted. That night I spoke to nobody but my friend the nun. I unbosomed myself to her, and told her all that had passed between the officer and me; at which she seemed agreeably surprized: and I concluded with desiring her to come and see me in the morning. She entered the room the next day before I was awake; at

which she was going to retire; when, by her pulling the door after her, I opened my eyes, called her back, and desired her to take a chair, and seat herself by my bed-side. ‘ My dear friend,’ said I, ‘ I have, for some days, had a design to retire from the world, and fix myself for the rest of my life in that serene and tranquil state you have embraced.’—‘ How! would you be a nun?’ cried she, interrupting me. ‘ Yes,’ returned I; ‘ my life is subject to too many events; I find every thing is uncertain and precarious: Valville’s infidelity has given me a disgust to the world; I find he is still too dear to my heart; and I must not, I dare not, see him more. Providence has given me enough to settle me here: my deed of gift will secure to me this peaceful retreat, where I shall live with you in a perfect repose, without being at any one’s expence.’—‘ Any other but me,’ she returned, ‘ would immediately applaud your resolution: but I am too much your friend to advise you to pursue your inclinations, where I foresee they would be followed by repentance. When we can have a day entirely to ourselves, I will give you the history of my life; you will then be more able to form a judgment of your situation: and if, after that, you persist in your intention of taking the veil, you will be more sensible of the importance of your engagements.’ But it is time, Madam, for me to break off; I am sufficiently fatigued; and must therefore make you wait a little longer for the continuation of my adventures.

END OF THE EIGHTH PART.



THE

VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

PART IX.



OUR commendations, dear Madam, of my generous behaviour to my unfaithful lover, so agreeably flatter my vanity, that I cannot help expressing my acknowledgments. We are all of us naturally fond of applause, as it is a kind of proof that we have some reason for that complacency with which we are apt to regard our own actions. Self-love is the universal spring that moves in every breast, the reigning principle which governs the soul, and gives laws to our behaviour. The mind that is actuated by the low prospects of sensual pleasure, and that which is animated by a love of virtue, and the refined delight which attends the practice of great actions, have the same source; it is all self-love, all a desire of happiness. But to proceed with my history.

—You remember, I suppose, that I had given my friend the nun an account of my adventure with the officer; that I had told her my desire of taking the veil; and that she had earnestly persuaded me against it. Her warmth and seriousness on this subject at once surprised and alarmed me: I thought her before perfectly happy; and I had reason to think so, for she always appeared to have a mind full of tranquillity; but now I began to fear I was mistaken; I longed to hear the history of her life; but as Mrs. De Valville was to be there in the afternoon, and it would be soon time for me to dress, she desired me to defer it. ‘I have a great variety of adventures to relate,’ said she; ‘and I ought to take some time to re-collect myself.’ I arose with a mind

more calm than it had been for some time past. She endeavoured to divert my thoughts from Valville, by mentioning the happiness I might expect from a union with the generous officer. ‘His sentiments, I find,’ said she, ‘are too noble, too agreeable to yours, not to make you charmed with him. He will at once be a tender husband, a father, and a friend; his good sense will render him always engaging; you will forget his years; and, in short, return his passion: you will find your esteem gradually strengthen and grow up to love.’—‘Alas, my friend!’ returned I, ‘you are quite mistaken; I find Valville, my dear, my unfaithful Valville, has still the entire possession of my heart; and I can find no room there for any other object. I confess the gentleman you mention has inspired me with the highest esteem; his open frankness at our first interview, and his conversation at Mrs. Dorlin’s, have rendered me highly sensible of his merit; but it is a sensibility very different from the tenderness of love. He inspires me with a regard much like the reverence which is due to a father. I shall be glad of his friendship, and shall readily give him every proof of mine; every proof that the strictest virtue, and my unconquerable love to Valville, will permit.’—‘Marianne,’ replied my friend, ‘Valville has rendered himself unworthy of this tenderness; indeed you are too constant, considering his infidelity: but, however, it is possible he may return to you again, and love you with more fondness than ever.’—‘I do not think I have

'I have any reason to cherish such flattering hopes,' returned I with a sigh; 'I have no expectations of that kind; and, though I despair of conquering my passion, I must endeavour to do it. His cold and constrained looks pierce through my soul; his indifference is insupportable; and absence alone must fortify my mind, and enable me to repulse that flood of tenderness which flows in upon it whenever I think of him.'

Here a lay-sister entered with my breakfast, and told the nun that the ladies waited for her below. I had no sooner ate a little, than I dressed, in order to receive Mrs. De Valville: at last she arrived; but, methought, she looked out of order; a languid paleness was spread over her face, and all the marks of a real illness were visible there. 'How do you do, my dear?' said she, as soon as I entered the parlour. 'I find I shall not be able to stay long with thee to-day, for I am not well.'—'I see it, mamma,' returned I with a look full of tenderness. 'Pray, what is the matter?'—'I do not know,' returned she; 'I have not been perfectly well for some time. But come, do not afflict thyself,' added she, seeing me ready to weep; 'I shall soon recover. My son's infidelity I think unpardonable; it is always uppermost in my mind: I am provoked at it to the highest degree. I have just found out an intrigue, that has completely surprised and shocked me. I had no sooner got home last night from Mrs. Dorfin's, than I was told that a letter from Versailles, directed to my son, had been left there; and that my servants were ordered to give it him as soon as possible: but, as I imagined he was gone thither himself, and could not tell whether it might not contain something relating to his post, which might be of importance enough to require me to send it after him, I resolved to break it open. However, I sent it first to my country-house; that it might be given him if he was there; but this morning the man returned, and brought it back, with the news that he set out for Versailles yesterday; on which I went into my closet, opened, and read it. I have brought it to thee, my dear; it would shock my delicacy too much to read it to

thee,' added she, pulling it out of her pocket: 'thou shalt thyself be a witness of his ungenerous proceedings; and, I hope, it will enable thee to overcome thy passion; for, when thou hast entirely ceased to esteem him, thou wilt soon cease to love him too.' I opened it; but not without a great deal of trouble; and found the following lines.

'SIR,

'I Can no longer avoid disposing of my commission: I am not at all pleased with your delays, and those of your friends. As I am resolved to spend the rest of my days in a peaceful retirement from noise and business, I think every day an age that keeps me from my country-seat. I have settled all my affairs, and am resolved to be there in a few days. You cannot blame me if I dispose of my post to another; since, if it had not been your own fault, you might have been in possession of it long ago. I am, &c.

I had no sooner read it over to myself, but I sighed, let fall some tears, and was unable to speak; when Mrs. De Valville resumed—'How ill he repays my tenderness! Ungrateful, unworthy man! I am resolved he shall be sensible of my resentment!'—'Dear mamma!' cried I, interrupting her, and throwing myself at her feet, 'do not sink me into despair: I cannot bear to think of your using him unkindly upon my account. Let me entreat you not to oppose his happiness: he has too much reason to forgive me; I do not complain of him. He was, perhaps, born to enjoy a happiness superior to that which I could bestow upon him: he has a soul sensible of the nicest honour; a soul which will not suffer him to do an action that would bring upon him as much disgrace and contempt as if he had been guilty of the blackest crime. Would you have him insensible of the remonstrances of his friends? Would you have him regardless of their contempt and scorn? And would you suffer me to be the cause of all that ignominy that would fall upon you both? No, Madam, it was I alone that was to blame; it is I alone that you ought to be offended with: I have dared to presume upon your goodness; and, dazed

'dazzled with the pleasing prospect that lay before me, have encouraged a passion, which must necessarily have drawn after it the most fatal, the most dreadful consequences. Let me entreat you, by all your tenderness for me, to forget those engagements which have passed between us; let me entreat you to reinstate him in your favour; to approve of his new passion: and suffer me to look upon him as my brother. I will never leave you till you forgive him. You must either forgive him, or kill me. The reflection of my causing a breach between you would be too much for me to support!'

Here my tears prevented my saying any more: my dear mother wept too; and we both were silent for some moments; we wiped our eyes; and then she cried out—'Oh, my daughter! how generous is this! Would you persuade me to pardon him? you, whom he has injured, persuade me to return him my affection! Was he sensible of thy behaviour, I am sure it must chase every other passion from his breast: he will never find another like thee.'—'Yes, Madam, as I am the cause of his offending you, I ought to be the first to promote a reconciliation. Think, mamma, how amiable has been his character hitherto; and then consider if one action ought to destroy that esteem which he has been raising for many years.'—'My dear,' returned she with an affecting look, that darted through her tears, 'thy goodness has overcome me; thou hast raised all the mother in my breast: and, since thou canst forgive him, sure I ought to do so too.'—'I sincerely thank you, mamma,' returned I: 'but this is not all; you must give him your consent to marry Miss Varthon. I had once the prospect of spending my life in the pleasing toil of promoting his felicity; of industriously pursuing every means to increase his love, and augment his happiness. But I must for ever lay aside these transporting hopes; and can only use my entreaties, that you would permit him to be blessed by a lady who is more happy than I deserve to be. Consider, Madam, he is your son; consider how great has been your tenderness for him; and how well he has deserved an esteem, which no considerations for me ought ever to su-

perse: and then I am sure you will deny him nothing. His only crime is indulging an involuntary passion; but his concealing it from you can only prove that he fears to give you pain; that he dreads that as an evil which he most earnestly desires to avoid. He has been afraid you should push things to extremities; and therefore, rather than offend you, has declined accepting of an advantageous post; and chuses rather to refuse those honours which he might easily obtain, than give you an uneasy moment.'—'Enough, my dear! enough!' she returned with an engaging smile: 'you make use of the very motives of my resentment to procure a reconciliation: I did not consider his behaviour, in throwing in obstacles to retard his preferment, in the light thou dost. He is still my son; and he shall find that I have all the affection of a mother. I will endeavour to see him as soon as he returns to Paris; I will tell him I still persist in my resolution to contribute all I can to render him happy: and, as you desire it, I consent that he shall chuse his own way of being so. But, at the same time, I will let him know what he owes to thee: and if he has any remains of generosity and ingenuity, thy goodness, I am sure, must fill him with admiration, and make him resume all his former tenderness for thee.'—'Dear mamma,' replied I, 'do not fill me with such vain, such delusive expectations: they are too agreeable to me; I dare not indulge them.' Yet notwithstanding, I could not help thinking there was some reason for her opinion: 'It is not impossible,' said I immediately to myself, 'but he may be sensible how much he is obliged to me; he may be charmed with the disinterestedness of my passion.' This reflection gave me a most sensible pleasure; and I could not help representing my dear Valville to my mind, in a suppliant posture, entreating forgiveness, and saying the most tender things.

My dear mamma arose up, and was going to leave me, when I desired her to stay a little longer. I then repeated all that had passed between the officer and me, when he paid me a visit a few days before. She smiled, and seemed extremely pleased. 'Well,' cried she, as soon as I had done, 'I could not help observing

observing something in his behaviour afterwards at Mrs. Dorfin's, that rendered him more than ordinarily engaging; nay, that lady, added she, gave me a hint, that she fancied thou hadst made him thy captive. He seemed peculiarly desirous of rendering himself agreeable to thee: and we both observed that his looks were continually fixed upon thee; and that thou hardly ever spokest, but his eyes sparkled with a pleasing vivacity. But you do not tell me what is your resolution. He is a person of great merit; and has a delicacy and elevation of mind, that must render him very valuable in thy esteem: he has a way of thinking almost peculiar to himself. In short, he is a very extraordinary person; and I persuade myself, that a conformity of sentiments will soon render your tenderness reciprocal. What dost thou resolve? Will not he possess that place in thy heart, which my son has so justly forfeited?—'I shall make no difficulty, mamma, of telling you the situation of my mind,' returned I: 'I have a very great esteem for him; his frankness and generosity, his good sense and virtue, make me look upon him as a person who deserves my friendship. But Mr. De Valville has still the possession of my heart: I find he is too dear to me, not to regret his loss as a most severe affliction. His infidelity has not made me love him less; but, on the contrary, it has rather increased my tenderness: indeed, I did not think he had been so very dear to me as I find he is. Though I am obliged to give my new lover all the esteem he deserves, yet I cannot help looking upon him with a respectful kind of awe, which will ever prevent my loving him with that tenderness which is due to a husband: and, while Valville is unmarried, I can never bear to think of entering into engagements which must render it impossible for him to be mine.'—'I can only advise thee, my dear,' said she, 'to consult thy own breast; and to endeavour to be as serene as possible: a virtue like thine must one day meet with its reward. But farewell; I shall see thee again in two or three days time,' added she, putting as many of her fingers as she could through the grate, which I took hold

of, and kissed with a respectful tenderness. She then repeated her assurances of an eternal affection for me, and retired.

She left me in a situation not to be expressed; I reflected with pleasure on my having reconciled my mother to her son: my generous behaviour suspended my uneasiness; and I felt a delightful harmony in my breast, which every thought seemed to increase. All peaceful, serene, and composed, full of self-applause, full of the satisfaction which reason approves and heightens, I felt a delight which was more exquisite, sublime, than can be imagined. How more unlike the mad transports of jealous rage, which disturb, torture, and rack the soul! which fill the mind with a thousand contending passions; and can only be followed by remorse and disappointment. But I had taken the sweetest method of revenge; a revenge which was most likely to meet with success, and wound my unfaithful lover in the tenderest and most sensible part. I foresaw that my behaviour would cover him with shame, and make him reflect how little I deserved to be disregarded by him, who could forfeit all my hopes to promote his happiness. At last, Mrs. De Valville's indisposition came into my mind, and immediately gave a damp to my satisfaction: however, I flattered myself that she would soon recover; and with this hope regained my tranquillity.

I saw my mother almost every day; but, alas! she appeared to be in such a declining condition, that her presence always filled me with the most cruel alarms. She seemed, indeed, more nearly attached to me than ever; her tenderness exceeded all bounds; and her whole soul appeared to be entirely taken up with her affection for me, and to be filled with the sincerest concern for my happiness. When the day appeared in which I expected to see the officer, I dressed, and prepared to receive him: but he was in the parlour sooner than I expected; however, I did not make him wait long; I went down to him with a mind a little discomposed, at the apprehensions of the pain I should give him. After the usual compliments were over—'You see, Miss,' said he with an air of gaiety, 'that I have kept to your appointment: I have deliberately reflected upon all the consequences

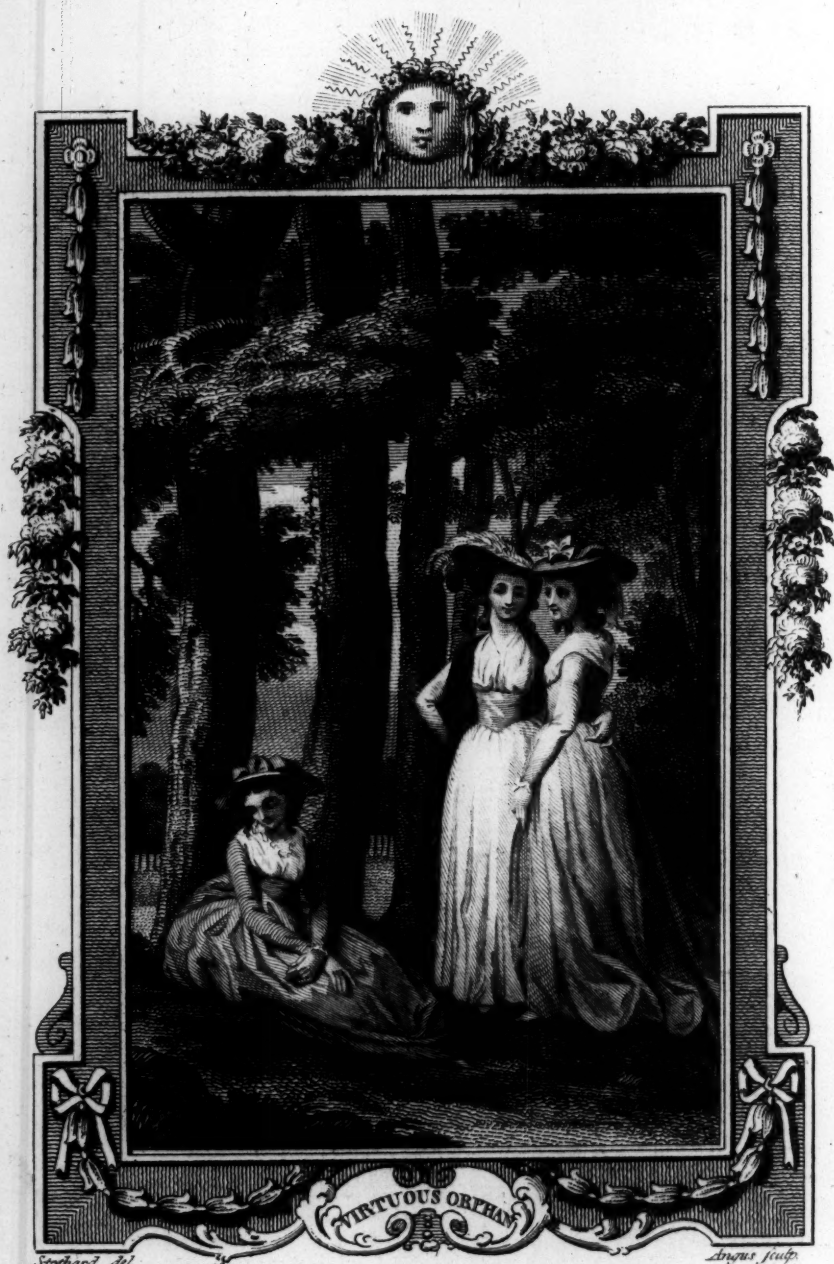
quences that may attend our union, and have not been able to find one that can for a moment shake my resolution: may I hope to have a share in your friendship; in that sincere and tender friendship which must render the indissoluble knot for ever sweet and full of charms? All I wait for now is to know the result of your reflections.'—'Sir,' returned I, 'I shall make no difficulty of telling you my mind with the utmost freedom. Your behaviour, your generosity, your unexceptionable character, have given me a very high opinion of your merit; and I ought to esteem your proposal as a very great honour: but I find I cannot enter into any new engagements. Valville, though unfaithful, is still dear to me: however, your friendship is too desirable not to make me earnestly wish for the continuance of it; and I shall think myself very happy, if, after this, you grant me a share in your esteem.' I observed, while I spoke, a visible concern spread over his countenance; and, after I had done, he stood some moments in a thoughtful posture, without making any reply: at last, he recovered himself; and with an engaging, though sorrowful air, assured me that, since he must not hope to be so happy as he could wish, he would gladly embrace every opportunity to serve me, and that I should always find him my sincerest and most affectionate friend; and in that character, he hoped, I would sometimes permit him to see me at my mother's, or Mrs. Dorbin's. This request was too reasonable to be denied him; I readily consented to it: and on this he left me.

For three days after this I heard no news of my mother. On the fourth, in the morning, a lay-sister entered my apartment, and told me that a coach was waiting for me in the court, with a servant from Mrs. De Valville; on which I dressed, and went down. I found one of her maids at the door with a letter; in which she told me she was at her country-house, and longed to see me there. She had delivered another letter to the abbess; so I had nothing to do but to get into the coach. I did so, and soon arrived at my mamma's: she received me with her usual affection. I should have thought myself extremely happy in being near her, if

her increasing disorder had not filled me with the utmost inquietude; a soft languishment appeared in her eyes, and her countenance, pale and sickly, made me fear I should soon be deprived of all the comfort, all the repose, of my life. Valville's infidelity had hitherto given me the severest pain; but now my affliction for his mother made me forget every other cause of grief. I struggled with myself to put on, before her, a countenance as serene as possible; but whenever I was from her, I sought to be alone: I then gave a loose to my sorrow, and uttered the severest complaints. 'Oh! why have I tasted,' said I, melting into tears, 'the sweet, the delightful satisfactions that spring from a filial affection to the dearest, the best of mothers, if I must so soon feel her loss? Why was I made happy to be sunk the deeper in despair? O my God!' then cried I, 'fortify my mind against the agonizing torture that flows in upon it; fill my soul with fortitude; and may I never, never offend thee, by repining at thy providence! O that thou wouldst but take my life for hers, and save me the anguish of lamenting her loss!' These reflections soon spread such a gloom over my face, as made it impossible for me to disguise my disorder before her. She resolved I should not leave her; and, to dissipate my uneasiness, constrained herself to assume an air of gaiety and cheerfulness; but she did not tell me she took notice of my disorder, any other way than by thus endeavouring to remove it. I was sensible of this instance of her goodness; and my heart owned the obligation, and sincerely thanked her for it. But some days after, observing I still had the same concern upon my spirits, she desired me to take a turn with her into the garden; on which we went to the most shady part of it, that we might enjoy the benefit of a soft breeze which played amongst the leaves, without being incommoded by the heat of the sun. We sat down upon a bench together near a cascade, whose aquatick murmurs seemed to soothe the disposition of our minds. 'My daughter,' said she, looking upon me with eyes full of a maternal tenderness, 'I cannot help taking notice of thy assiduity and concern for my health. Thou art unwilling to leave me even for a mo-

ment; and when thou dost so, I have reason to believe that I take up all thy thoughts. Thou returnest to me with thy eyes red, which informs me that thou hast been crying; and the appearance of so much disorder, that I can no longer help taking notice of it. I thought my silence, and thy own reflections, might make thee resume thy gaiety, or, at least, prevail upon thee to moderate thy concern: but, I find, they have a different effect. Consider, my dear; thou needest not be told that I am mortal: I freely confess I am in a consumption; and thou must not wonder if thou seest me snatched from thee. Thou wilt lose a mother whose tenderness may deserve some tears: but I shall not leave thee without a friend; Mrs. Dorfin will think herself happy in having thee for a companion; she will make up my loss, and return thee all the affection thou canst bestow upon her.—‘Dear, dear mamma!’ cried I, interrupting her, and lifting up my head, with the tears running down my cheeks, ‘Mrs. Dorfin is not you!’ Scarce could I pronounce these words for my sighs, which almost rendered them unintelligible. Here we were both silent; and sighs and groans were all that passed for some time: at last, recollecting herself, and taking hold of my hand—‘Thy softness moves me too much,’ she resumed. ‘But, my dear, consider that you must have parted with me, had I lived some years longer: our separation would then have been as severe as it is now. The sweetest pleasure I ever knew was that which sprang from communicating the blessings which Heaven has bestowed upon me; a pleasure so sublime, that it gives me the highest satisfaction even in the prospect of my dissolution. I shall be judged by a Being whose dispositions are the same as my own; a Being whom I have always loved to think on under the endearing character of a Father; and a Being, too, not swayed by prejudice, but the Impartial Distributer of justice; and who is as superior in his benevolence and compassion as the nature of God is more exalted than that of the lowest part of his rational creation! Death, my dear, by reflection, grows familiar to the mind: I find it insensibly loses all it’s horrors; the gloom vanishes;

the spectre is stripped of it’s terrors; and, in an angel’s form, opens the way to boundless joys, and delights unutterable! On this side are care, trouble, and anxiety; on that, rapturous pleasures, eternal felicity, and ‘endless peace!’ Here she paused; and then, looking at me with eyes which expressed all the tender sentiments of her heart—‘My dear,’ added she, ‘I confess I cannot think of leaving thee without some regret: I long, too, to see my son, and to embrace him with that tenderness which is due from a mother to a child, to whom she must bid a long adieu! As for thee, I would persuade thee to moderate thy affliction, and arm thyself with a firmness of mind sufficient to support my loss with courage. Think, wherever I am, I shall love thee still: not all the delights of Heaven, though infinitely various, will make me forget thee; thou wilt there furnish out a pleasing subject of discourse; and I shall wish for the happy time when I shall congratulate thee on thy arrival in that world of love, where our raptures will increase by communicating them!’—‘O mamma!’ cried I, with my eyes sparkling with soft delight, ‘how sweetly you soothe my grief! What an engaging prospect you lay before me! What an assemblage of noble and pleasing ideas! Yes! our affection will be as lasting as our souls: we shall be eternally dear to each other; friendship, love, and devotion, will fill our minds, and give us joys more solid than the prospect of the golden pavement, and the delicious groves crowned with immortal verdure! You have brought such a picture to my mind, that I cannot help anticipating our future happiness, and imagining us possessed of all that is most sweet and desirable. But do not imagine, dear mamma, that I can think of a separation from you without pain; no! it is impossible! I have reason to be highly sensible of your loss: I cannot lose the dearest friend on earth; I cannot be separated from that mind which sympathizes in all my concerns without a cruel anguish! Life will lose all it’s charms; and it would require much less resolution for me to die with you than to live without you: but I will endeavour



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‘to be as calm as possible; I will reflect upon your happiness till I forget my own misery; I will set your example before my eyes; and learn from you to conquer my vanity, and all my youthful follies.’

Here we were interrupted by a servant, who came to tell us that a coach was just entered the court with Miss De Fare; on which we immediately went to receive her: she saluted us with an air that had a mixture of friendship and confusion; and she was at first so much disconcerted, that she knew not how to express herself. ‘My sincere affection for you and Miss, has constrained me, Madam, to wait upon you,’ said she to my mother, ‘to enquire after your health. I am very sorry that I cannot appear before you without blushing for my mother’s indiscretion; though I am conscious I have not done any thing inconsistent with that friendship and regard I owe you both.’—‘Pray, Miss,’ returned Mrs. De Valville, ‘do not you make any apologies; for you need no justification in our esteem; you have never offended us: and your company is too agreeable for us to suffer you to spend your time in excuses, which are equally painful to us all. Let Mrs. De Fare’s imprudence be forgotten.’ On this we went into the parlour; and discoursed, the rest of the day, on indifferent subjects.

At night this young lady was going to leave us; but my mother pressed her to stay two or three days with such earnestness that she could not refuse her: on which we wrote to her mamma, and sent back the coach. We spent the evening in a conversation more grave than ordinary: though the arrival of this amiable lady had given me a great deal of satisfaction, yet it could not dissipate the uneasiness in which my mind was involved at the dreadful apprehensions of losing my dear mother. That engaging lady endeavoured to enliven the discourse; but in vain. When it was time for us to go to bed, I entreated her to let me lie with her; but she would not consent to it, on account of her cough, which she thought would disturb me. In the morning, Miss De Fare and I went into Mrs. De Valville’s apartment; but, finding her asleep, we agreed to take a walk in the fields behind the garden. As my

weakness made the least disorder visible, she had observed the settled disturbance of my mind, which I easily perceived by her looks; which were expressive of a very tender and generous concern: but as she, perhaps, imagined that Valville’s infidelity was the cause, she did not think fit to renew my uneasiness by taking notice of it. We went through the back gate of the garden, where a double row of tall elms extended a great length, and seemed, at the farther end, to close and form a thick grove. She endeavoured to divert me by an agreeable conversation, which was accompanied, on each side, with the most friendly and affectionate endearments: and she so artfully suited herself to the disposition of my mind, that I could not help being exceedingly moved. We had walked a considerable way, and were talking of returning back, when we saw a young woman, genteelly dressed, sitting with her back towards us, under one of the trees, at a small distance before us: a little spark of curiosity made us desirous to walk on; when, coming pretty near, she seemed to be lost in thought, and was in a posture expressive of the deepest despair. We crossed the walk to gain a sight of her countenance; and stood some time to observe her actions. Her eyes were, at first, fixed on the ground; but she soon after lifted them up to Heaven; when we observed the tears trickle down her cheeks: this sight, joined to some bitter sighs which escaped her, equally affected us both. We went up to her, with a resolution to give her all the assistance we were capable of: I no sooner spoke, but she started, and turned her head to us, (for we had, hitherto, only a side-view of her face) and immediately arose; when we saw a countenance on which was painted a mixture of grief and shame. She was very young; her features were perfectly regular; and her eyes full of the most melting softness. ‘May we know, Madam, the cause of your uneasiness?’ said I: ‘you may depend upon our assistance, if we are happy enough to be able to serve you. We beg pardon for our intrusion; but, as we were unable to see you without being moved, so we could not refrain from offering you our friendship, in order to dissipate your uneasiness as well as ours.—’

'This lady,' said I, turning to Miss De Fare, 'I am sure, feels the same affection for you that I do; and will gladly contribute to remove your troubles; for the virtuous peculiarly deserve the esteem of the virtuous.' Here she stood for some time silent, as if in suspense, and at a loss how to behave: at last, wiping her eyes—'I do not know how to express the sense I have of your goodness, ladies,' said she, blushing: 'you do not know me; and, if you did, I am persuaded you would lose all your generous sentiments for me. Permit me to retire: it is sufficient that you know I am a wretch beneath your notice.' At this Miss De Fare could contain herself no longer: she took hold of her hand, and entreated her not to leave us so abruptly. 'We desire, Miss,' said she, 'to know no more than you are willing to tell us. Pray, compose yourself; and do us the favour to breakfast with us: though it may not be in our power to serve you, oblige us with your company, and accept of our friendship.' To this she consented; but not without the appearance of some reluctance. As Miss De Fare seized one of her hands, I took hold of the other: and, as we began to walk back—'Ladies,' said she, looking upon each of us with eyes full of gratitude, 'I am incapable of thanking you as I ought: you do not know me; and I wish I could forever conceal my misfortunes from you, and hide the cause of my misery; but I shall no sooner be discovered, but your friendship will be turned into aversion and horror; you will then detest me as much as I do myself. Oh! may you never feel the stings of conscious guilt!' added she, squeezing both our hands, and the tears gushing afresh from her eyes.

We were extremely moved at this unexpected interview; and neither Miss De Fare nor I could refrain from weeping. We arrived; and I immediately went into my mother's room, and left Miss De Fare, with the disconsolate lady, below. I found her awake, and ready to arise; a sweet sleep had recruited her spirits, and very much refreshed her. She received me with a smile. 'My child,' said she, 'I hope Miss's company has diverted thee. I am much better than I was yesterday;

after breakfast we will divert ourselves; but do not be too grave. I expect Mrs. Dorfin here to-day; and do not doubt but we shall spend the time very agreeably.' I expressed my joy at the alteration which, indeed, was visible in her countenance, in the most lively terms. 'O Madam,' cried I, embracing her, 'how happy should I be might I flatter myself with the hopes of your recovery! How delightful would be the prospect of spending my life with you!'—'My dear,' returned she, interrupting me, 'my life is very precarious: learn to resign thyself to the Divine Will; that wise, that beneficent Being, who has the disposal of thy life and mine, knows what is best for us both. But where is Miss De Fare?'—'She is below with a young stranger,' said I, 'that we intend to introduce to you; whom I hope you will find worthy of your friendship.'—'I do not doubt it, my dear,' returned she: 'thy recommendation makes me her friend before I see her. But where didst thou find her?' On this I related our little adventure. She seemed extremely pleased with it; and immediately dressed to wait upon her. As soon as she was ready, she went into the parlour, and received her with an air of the most engaging affability: but all our caresses could not disperse the gloom from her countenance; we saw that something preyed upon her spirits, and that her mind was too disordered to render it possible for her to assume an air of cheerfulness, even for a moment. As soon as breakfast was over, my mother proposed taking a turn in her coach for an hour or two, to see the country, and take the benefit of the air. The unknown young lady desired to be excused; but, at our expressing an unwillingness to part with her, she consented. My dear mamma's conversation I thought more lively than ever; though we discoursed of some subjects that were perfectly grave; but she had the art of handling the most serious topics in a manner that rendered them very engaging.

But, however agreeable they were to me, I am afraid, Madam, you will think them quite tedious: I have, perhaps, dwelt too long upon these serious discourses, which to you may appear insupportable; but, for all this, I have
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a great mind to go on with them a little farther, because the thoughts may possibly be new to you. However, if you think yourself in danger of the vapours, pray pass over a few leaves, and you will be infallibly out of danger. But to return.

I think I told you, Madam, when I drew you a portrait of my mother's heart, that her conceptions of the Divine goodness and justice were almost peculiar to herself. This conversation will shew you what ground I had for such an assertion. 'Nothing can be more shocking,' said she, 'than the villainies that have been practised under the venerable name of religion. Who can reflect on the horrid devastations that have been spread through the world by mad priests and furious bigots, without being filled with detestation and horror? How preposterous is it to attempt to please the most merciful Being in the universe, by cancelling his gentle impressions from our minds, and behaving without mercy! Wherever superstition and enthusiasm have prevailed, they have banished every natural, every noble, sentiment from the human breast. How unaccountable is it that we should ever attempt to delight the most wise and intelligent of all beings with little tricks and ceremonies equally trifling and vain! How absurd to endeavour to render propitious the most perfect, the most benevolent disposition, by any thing else but acting according to the dignity of our intelligent natures, raising ourselves as near as possible to his perfection; and thus, in some measure, rendering ourselves worthy of his esteem! Nor less profane is it,' added she, 'to address the Mighty Father of mankind, who ought to be approached with the most humble awe and the profoundest veneration, with the amorous language, and the fond endearments that are more justly bestowed upon our own species: how monstrous is this spiritual kind of debauchery! Nature abhors the impious profanation, and starts from a worship so impure and sacrilegious.' These were the principal subjects of our discourse, in which Miss De Fare and I bore a part with an agreeable satisfaction. Religion, stripped of the gloom and unnatural solemnity with

which melancholy spirits are apt to cloath it, will ever appear lovely and engaging to a reasonable mind: it owes all it's beauty to it's own simplicity and native excellence; and whenever it is made to oppose the indispensable obligations of reason and nature, it must be degraded, and sunk in the opinion of every intelligent and virtuous being. The person who has experienced the exquisite pleasures that attend the practice of the social virtues, and with an humble and upright mind gratefully adores the supreme and unexhausted Source of benignity, has satisfactions unknown to the sensualist and epicure, the superstitious and enthusiast. Virtue to such a mind appears always lovely and divinely charming: it's graces are more attractive than the delusive pleasures which court our enjoyment; it is the highest gratification of our rational natures; it fills the soul with the most delightful harmony, whilst all besides is jarring discord and endless confusion. But I have done.

During this conversation, I frequently cast my eyes upon the young stranger, and observed that her cheeks glowed with incessant blushes; methought she felt all the charms of virtue, and yet at the same time seemed stunned and confounded: she sometimes looked upon me with an air of friendship, then sighed, and let fall some tears. As we stepped out of the coach, she desired me to walk with her in the garden for a few minutes; to which I gladly consented, and went full of the hopes that she would tell me the cause of her uneasiness; and put it in my power to give her some proof that I sympathized in her afflictions. 'Dear Miss,' said she, as soon as we were alone, 'I cannot help being desirous of having you for my friend; your tenderness and generous concern for my uneasiness prepossesses me in your favour, and inclines me to return you the utmost affection; but I must then disclose all my misery; this you would demand as a proof of my confidence: but, alas! it would be such a proof of it as would entirely change your kind dispositions to serve me; you would hate, you would detest me; and your displeasure would aggravate my despair, which even now exceeds all bounds.'—'Indeed, Miss, you in-

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'jure me very much,' returned I.
 'Whatever is the cause of your trouble, it will not make me forget what I owe to the distressed: Heaven knows I would do any thing to serve you; and I assure you I will never desire you to tell me any thing that will give you so much pain; only let me know what I can do for you; I will ask no questions, but my obedience alone shall prove my friendship.' Here she continued silent, and cast down her eyes, while her countenance informed me that her mind was tormented with the most painful agitations. She opened her lips several times as if she would speak, but a rising sigh prevented her: at last, casting a look upon me full of tenderness, grief, and shame—'I would,' said she, 'lay open my guilt before you, but my tongue refuses to obey me. Alas! I could wish my infamy was hid in eternal oblivion: but that can never be; and, if I do not tell it you, you will learn it from others. I was educated with the strictest piety: my situation in life was easy and agreeable; and all around conspired to make me happy. But, alas! flattered with my little beauty, I forgot myself: I listened to every one that was pleased to address me; and rejoiced in the conquest of a multitude of admirers. But, in the height of my vanity, an unforeseen accident plunged me into the deepest distress: my father died suddenly, and left his affairs in a very bad situation. I lamented his loss with an unfeigned sorrow: I had no visible means of support. My friends forsook me; and I had only an uncle to depend upon, who was gone abroad, and could not give me an immediate assistance: I was even disregarded by those who, a few days before, professed to have the most violent passion for me; no prospect of relief lay before me. In short, I lived upon the little that remained of my father's substance, till that was expended; when I was addressed by a gentleman of fortune, who took advantage of my distress, and basely made use of every expedient to force me to comply with his criminal desires. At last, my coward soul, shocked at the appearance of want and misery, consented; and I was ruined. But who

'can express the horrors that flowed in upon me, when cool reflection brought the guilty scene to view? Oh! how sharp are the upbraidings of an offended conscience! What inward perturbations distracted my mind! I was incapable of taking the least repose. No ray of comfort shone into my breast: I reflected on my education, and the pious instructions that my tender mother had inculcated into my mind in my early infancy. But this reflection renewed my anguish. "A prostitute! a wretched, a vile prostitute!" cried I. "Am I that guilty wretch? Oh! that I had submitted to the severest hardships! If I had begged my bread, I might have been virtuous still: I might, even then, have looked up with a mind conscious of its innocence; and have beheld the face of mankind without a guilty blush." In short, I cursed my vanity and folly, that made me rather stoop to be really miserable and truly contemptible, than to lose the gay, the vain trifles of life. In the midst of these agitations, I received a letter from my uncle: he had heard of my father's death, and the unhappy circumstances in which he had left me; and therefore hastened to town, with an intention to console me, and supply the place of his deceased brother, by being my guardian, my friend, and kind benefactor. He arrived the night before, just after I had retired to the house of my pretended lover: he knew his character, and foresaw that I was ruined. He upbraided me with the infamy I had brought upon his family; and ordered me never to see him more. I was shocked at the contents of this letter; and abandoned myself, for some time, to the severest despair. Had I continued virtuous but one hour longer, I might now have been happy. I loved my uncle; but I durst not meet his reproaches; and I was ashamed to appear where my guilt would soon be made publick: I therefore resolved to abandon my lover, and seek, from my industry, an honest support. This resolution was attended with an inward satisfaction. I humbly begged the Divine forgiveness, and implored the protection of his providence: and, after having taken

‘ taken a few rings that were my mother’s, and a little money and cloaths that I had still left, I abandoned that fatal house, without communicating my intention to any body. Though several days are passed since I put this design in execution, I have not found any relief: my little money is almost gone; and I have now no other prospect but of shortly wanting the necessaries of life. Oh, Miss! let not my guilt harden your heart against me!’ added she: ‘ do not be more inexorable than that Being who compassionates the penitent; and, I hope, has heard my prayers.’

This discourse was delivered in such a soft and plaintive voice, and accompanied with so many tears and sighs, that it seemed to melt my very soul. I forbore to look in her face, that I might not increase her blushes; and would gladly have spared her the confusion of making such a painful discovery, if it had not been necessary for me to know the most material circumstances, in order to give her some relief. I stood, some time after she had done, to consider what answer I should make her. She seemed surprized at my making her no reply; and then, casting her eyes upon me, and observing my tears—‘ I do not know, Miss,’ resumed she, ‘ what I ought to think of your silence: your virtue makes you, perhaps, loath and detest me; but you cannot do it more than I do myself. However, let me beg that you would not expose me.’

‘ No, Miss,’ returned I; ‘ I have not the least disposition to abuse the confidence you have reposed in me. I am sorry for your uneasiness; and sympathize with you in it: you have, indeed, had great cause to be afflicted; for guilt and misery are inseparable companions. Your repentance ought to restore you to the esteem of every virtuous mind: this should compose and calm your thoughts; for it is all that Heaven requires from frail offending mortals. I will not humble you so far, as to give you any thing; you was not born to receive charity: I only desire you would oblige me so far as to let me lend you a few louis d’ors, which you shall return when it suits your convenience. I will take your word for the payment of them,’ added I, pull-

ing out my purse, which I put into her hand. ‘ Pray, take what you want; and flatter yourself with the hopes that you will in a few days be restored to your uncle’s favour. But, in order to that, I must know your name, and where to direct to that gentleman.’—‘ O Miss!’ cried she, in a transport of joy, ‘ how noble, how generous, is your behaviour! Good God! this is too much!’ Here a fresh flood of tears stopped her voice; while she gave me a look which expressed all she would have uttered, in a language infinitely more affecting than any thing she could possibly have said to me.

As I began to think our long absence from the company might be taken notice of, I proposed our walking in; and desired her again to take freely what money she wanted; for she had not yet been able to open the purse, but stood holding it in her hand, without any motion: at last she took two louis d’ors. I insisted upon her taking five; which I could not prevail upon her to do without some importunity: when, returning me the purse without speaking a word, she took hold of my hand, and pressed it in a manner so tender and affecting, that I could not help being extremely moved. Her heart seemed to beat with sensations too violent for utterance; and methought she longed to press me to her breast, but had not confidence to do it: at last, as we were returning back—‘ My dear friend,’ cried she, ‘ forgive my not being able to express my gratitude: your goodness quite overwhelms me.’—‘ Enough, my friend,’ returned I: ‘ you owe me no thanks. Virtue is its own reward: my satisfaction, in being able to serve you, gives me a pleasure at least equal to yours. I wish I could restore peace and satisfaction to every troubled mind. Depend upon my friendship for the management of your affairs.’ Here we entered the house, and found Mrs. Dorfin and the officer there: they arose and saluted the young lady and me; and told us they had sent a servant to acquaint me with their arrival; but it was very easy for him to miss us in a garden of such a large extent. We had no sooner sat down, but we were told that dinner was on the table: during which Mrs. De Valville took no-

tice that the young stranger looked upon me with a complacency which she thought very remarkable. An air of serenity was spread over her face, which yet retained some of those marks of joy and admiration which had before agitated her mind. She was pleased with the change; but more so, as she imagined I was the cause of it; and congratulated that young lady on the return of her tranquillity. 'As you have not been pleased, Miss, to acquaint us with the cause of your late melancholy,' said she to her, 'perhaps it may not be agreeable to you to relate it; but as I am persuaded you have let Marianne into the secret, I hope you will permit her to communicate it to us, except you have any particular reason to the contrary. You may depend upon our secrecy, if the case requires it; and that we shall use our utmost endeavours to serve you, and prove that we deserve your confidence.' Miss Du Bois, for that was the young stranger's name, coloured at this proposal, and knew not what answer to return her: at last, after some hesitation—'I am obliged to you, Madam,' said she, 'for the share you take in my concerns; which are of such a nature as to render it absolutely necessary that they should be kept inviolably secret. I have, indeed, communicated my unhappy story to this young lady, whose goodness has in some measure calmed my mind: I will depend upon her prudence, and leave it to her to do as she shall think fit.' But as she seemed to grant me this liberty with some reluctance, we waved the subject, and the discourse turned upon Valville. 'My son,' said my mother, 'has got a very handsome fortune; and my death will very much increase it. You all know my affection for Marianne; and therefore cannot wonder to find that I have made some provision for her in my will. I have left my son my whole estate, except this house, with its furniture; the gardens round it, and two thousand livres a year; my picture, and some jewels and plate; which I give my daughter. My son cannot have the least reason to complain, since what I leave from him is but a trifle in comparison of my whole estate: besides, he has al-

ready a very large fortune left him by his father and my brother.—I believe you will approve, Sir, of what I have done; and think that at the same time that I have considered my affection for my daughter, I have not forgot what I owe to my son: I had, indeed, given her all, in giving my consent to their marriage; but I know my daughter is not avaricious, and will be very well satisfied with what I have now done for her.' The officer and Mrs. Dorfin appeared perfectly pleased with the contents of her will; and had begun to extol her equity and goodness, when I threw myself at her feet—'Dear Madam,' cried I, 'I need not tell you how sensible I am of your excessive kindness: you know how dear you are to me; and can easily put yourself in my place, and form an idea of the situation of a mind overflowing with every grateful sentiment. Each instance of your affection gives me a very sensible pleasure. How sweet is it to be obliged by those we love! But, dear mamma, how engaging soever this instance of your kindness is, I confess I cannot sincerely approve of it. Mr. De Valville has a right to enjoy all you possess after your decease; he has a claim to it, founded on reason and nature: he is your son, your only heir; and deserves to possess your estate entire. For my part, I am not ambitious: and, since I must be separated from Valville, I do not desire to enjoy any of his fortune, except what Mr. De Climal has left me; and your picture, which I shall value more than all the riches in the world. When you are gone, you will leave no charms behind for me; nothing will ever make life desirable.'—'Arise, child,' said my mother; 'and do not be silly: I believe thou wilt regret my loss, and be sincerely afflicted at it; but in time thy uneasiness will wear off, and thou wilt become reconciled to it. Valville has enough; and I dare say he will not be displeased at what I have done for thee: however, I may live a good while yet; mine is a very lingering distemper. This gentleman and lady, I am sure, think I could not do less for thee than I have done: however, as I hope to see my son again, I will tell him my design,' and

‘and know if he has any objection to it. Will not that satisfy thee?’— ‘Indeed, Miss,’ said Mrs. Dorfin, ‘you are too scrupulous; I cannot help approving of what your mother has done. But pray,’ added she, ‘is Miss Du Bois’s misfortune to be kept a secret? She has left it to your discretion to disclose it to us, if you think proper. She is a very amiable lady: but I could not help thinking that her blushes and confusion expressed a strong sense of guilt and shame. Am I right, my dear?’— ‘That, Madam, may perhaps be owing,’ said the officer, ‘to a delicacy which may make her look upon some circumstances of her misfortune as criminal, which in fact may not be so.’— ‘No, Sir,’ said I, ‘that is not the case: I am sorry to say Miss has been highly to blame; and I wish I could give you her story, and hide her guilt; but that could not be done consistent with truth: besides, it would deprive her of the advantage of your assistance. Poor lady! she is much to blame; but yet she deserves your pity and compassion; and I promise myself you will readily lend her your assistance. But I shall never be able to describe the horror and anguish of her mind; nor the painful struggle between her sense of virtue, and her shame at having offended against its precepts.’ Here I related every thing that passed; and concluded with desiring the officer to compassionate her case, and endeavour to make a reconciliation between her and her uncle. ‘I was just going to propose it to you, Miss,’ returned he: ‘I do not wonder at your being moved at such an affecting story. Happy is the person who, having behaved ill, has the resolution to repent; but more happy she who has not this need of repentance.’

I observed that, during my discourse, the two ladies listened with the utmost attention; while their countenances expressed the tenderest pity and the greatest surprise. When I had done, they wiped the tears from their eyes, and looked upon each other with an air of astonishment. At last, said Mrs. Dorfin— ‘How dreadful are the agonies that attend the loss of virtue! Dear-bought satisfactions that are accompanied with such exquisite mi-

‘fery, such lasting wretchedness! If her folly is divulged, she will never be able to wipe out the infamy that will attend her. Rivers of tears, and the severest repentance; no, not a life of the strictest virtue; will, in the opinion of the world, restore her innocence, or retrieve her character.’— ‘Very true,’ returned Mrs. De Valville; ‘the world is censorious; and though a thousand virtues may be overlooked, yet the indiscretion of an unguarded moment will never be forgotten: we must, therefore, conceal this unhappy affair.—I am very glad, Sir,’ added she, ‘that you are pleased to undertake the office of reconciling her uncle to her; and we all, I dare say, sincerely wish you success.’— ‘I thank you, ladies,’ replied he; ‘I see my success will give Miss Marianne a peculiar pleasure: but I must know where Miss Du Bois’s uncle lives.—Can you inform me, Miss?’— ‘Yes, Sir,’ returned I; and immediately gave him the direction I received from that lady. He had no sooner read it but he smiled. ‘I know the gentleman,’ said he; ‘and though I am concerned at the trouble this event must have occasioned him, I cannot help being pleased to think I shall serve a man of sense and honour; and, by restoring him his niece, I shall contribute to his repose. I will wait upon him immediately; I know he will hear reason: and though his virtue must have made him very sensible of his niece’s imprudence, yet the same virtuous disposition will prompt him to pardon her upon her repentance.’

On this the officer left us: but he had not been gone above two hours, before we saw him return. As he entered the room, we read in his looks that he had met with success: and after he had told us that our conjectures were true, he sat down; and, at my request, gave us a particular account of his adventures. ‘I happened,’ said he, ‘to find Mr. Du Bois at home, who received me in a most obliging manner, though he appeared to be very uneasy. After the first compliments were over, and we had drank part of a bottle, I took notice of his melancholy; and asked him if I could contribute to remove it: he thanked me; and, with an affected smile, told me that nothing was the
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“matter with him; then drank my health, and enquired how I liked his wine. I then mentioned his brother; and asked how long he had been dead: he gave me only a slight answer; and almost insensibly turned the discourse on another subject, without ever mentioning his niece. By this I imagined that he was tender of her honour; and concluded that, however displeased he was with her conduct, he had still some affection for her. I then took the liberty to mention her to him, and to propose a reconciliation; but he seemed surprized, and very much concerned to find that I was acquainted with an affair that was so little to her credit. “No, Sir,” said he, “I will never let my doors be open to such a strumpet.” As she has ruined herself, she must take the consequence of her folly. I will for ever disown her: she is a disgrace to her family. I will never be reconciled to her; and I desire, Sir, you will mention her no more.” This he spoke with a great deal of warmth, and with his looks full of resentment. Then musing a little — “Poor, unhappy girl!” resumed he, in a soft and quite different tone; “is her disgrace, then, made publick? What will become of her? Pray, Sir,” added he, “at whose request do you propose this reconciliation? Have you seen her?” — “Yes, Sir,” said I, “I saw her to-day.” And here, Miss, added he, addressing himself to me, “I gave him a particular account of all that passed between you this morning; at which he was so affected, that I saw I had gained my point before he told it me. “Sir,” said he, as soon as he found I had done, “I think myself greatly obliged to you for this information; I did not think she had been drove to such extremities. As soon as I was informed of my brother’s death, and the unhappy disorder in which he left his affairs, I made haste to town, that I might have the satisfaction of providing for his daughters, on whom I intended to bestow my estate; and who, I imagined, would be a comfort to me in this declining of life. I have always had a very great affection for her; and have loved her as tenderly as if she was my own child. I therefore went to my brother’s

“house, to comfort her for the loss of a tender father, and to taste the satisfaction of embracing her, the dear remains of his family; as well as to relieve her from her anxieties by my care and affection. But how great was my surprize! how inexpressible my grief! to find her seduced and carried off by a villain, who has not the least degree of virtue or honour. A paper I found on her toilette let me into the whole intrigue. He there takes advantage of her distress; promises her a considerable settlement; and makes use of a great deal of art to debauch her principles. I was shocked at his villainy, and her folly; and the next morning, after I had found that she had not been at home the night before, sent her a letter, in which I commanded her to see me no more. But I find I was too hasty: her repentance gives her a right to my compassion; I have had a very great concern for her upon my spirits, and have therefore carefully concealed her shame. Poor girl! how nearly is guilt allied to misery! What remorse and shame, what inward perturbations, what self-abbhorrence, fill the penitent mind upon the review of a vicious action! Such a state deserves our tenderest pity. Tell her, therefore, Sir, that I relent; and will gladly receive her to my favour.”

“As soon as he had finished this pathetic discourse, I told him I rejoiced to see him in such a favourable disposition, and would let the lady know how much she was obliged to his tenderness; and immediately took my leave.”

We all expressed a very sensible pleasure at his having so happily concluded this melancholy affair; and returned the officer our thanks on this occasion, in a manner which shewed how nearly we were interested in the lady’s happiness; and, as I was sensible how necessary this news was to her repose, I immediately resolved to be the welcome messenger of it: in short, I no sooner mentioned my design, but it was approved; the ladies smiled at my impatience; and the officer begged I would give him leave to accompany me, which I readily consented to. In the way I expressed afresh the sense I had of his goodness; and let him know that he had very much obliged

obliged me. As Miss Du Bois lodged not far from our house, we soon found her, and acquainted her with our success; when she burst into tears of joy, embraced me in the most affectionate manner, and thanked the officer in terms which expressed the most lively gratitude. But as it was late, she was obliged to defer waiting on her uncle till the next day. In my return home, I formed a design of being a spectator of the scene between her and Mr. Du Bois at their first interview, which I foresaw would be very interesting: besides, I fancied our company would keep up the spirits of the young lady, who possibly might fear meeting with some reproaches from him. I acquainted my mother with my thoughts, and she very much approved them; on which the gentleman and Mrs. Dorfin promised to come again in the morning, and bring Mr. Du Bois in the coach with them. In fine, the next day I wrote her a note, desiring her to come to dinner with us, and to defer waiting upon her uncle till the afternoon. She came immediately; and was engaged in conversation with Mrs. De Valville and I, when the officer and Mrs. Dorfin entered, and introduced the old gentleman, who had not the least thought of seeing his niece there. She saw him first, started up, trembled, and then suddenly threw herself at his feet. He had begun a compliment to my mamma; but broke off in the middle of a sentence; stood motionless, and appeared greatly surprized and disconcerted. However, he recovered himself first, and raised her up: when she appeared almost ready to faint, hung down her head, and had not the courage to look up. He was immediately touched; and endeavoured to inspire her with confidence by the most affectionate endearments: at last, she recovered a little; and, looking in his face, with the tears streaming from her eyes—'Oh, Sir!' cried she, in the most moving tone, 'can you, indeed, forgive me?'—'Yes, child!' replied he, weeping too; 'I ought to forgive thee: and I do it sincerely.'—'But, alas! I can never forgive myself!' she returned with a countenance expressive of the deepest remorse: 'to what miseries have I exposed myself! I have dishonoured you; justly forfeited your favour; and rewarded your kindness

'by rendering the object of it infamous and detestable: you ought to be ashamed of me; you have reason to despise me, as being a disgrace to your family. How ill have I requited your tenderness!'—'No more, my dear,' returned he; 'I cannot bear to hear it. Come, forget what is passed; and let it be as if it had never been.'—'Oh, that I could do so!' resumed she with a sigh; 'but it is impossible: the idea of my shame will ever be attended with the most painful anguish; I shall never reflect on this part of my life without a keen sense of guilt. But, Sir, is my infamy made public? Am I not already made the ridicule of the lowest of mankind? Am not I reproached and contemned by the wise and virtuous? Oh! that I had died a thousand deaths, rather than thus have stained my honour, and forfeited all that is most dear and valuable!'—'No, my dear,' returned he; 'the world is yet unacquainted with thy folly: the vile wretch who seduced thee has a design upon a rich old lady, whom he would marry to support his extravagance; his estate is almost all sold; and therefore he is obliged to be secret, because his success depends upon it.' As they began here to be something more calm, we desired them both to sit down: we were pleased with the old gentleman's good sense and tenderness, and desired that we might be honoured with his friendship; and that he would sometimes do us the favour to give us his and Miss's company; to which he readily consented.

Nothing, Madam, could be more moving than this affecting scene. Miss Du Bois's looks expressed, throughout, a mixture of shame and confusion; and her words and actions, the deepest repentance: on his side was all softness, a paternal affection, and a generous concern for her happiness. We could none of us refrain from weeping; and I observed that even the officer's manly countenance was bathed in tears.

What a wide extreme is there between virtue and vice! The first has the sublimest satisfactions, the pleasures of a God: the enjoyments of the last are low, transient, and pall upon the senses; they depend upon our extinguishing the very sense of our reasonable nature; and therefore are only the mean gratifica-

tions of a brute. The delights of the first are accompanied with inward complacency and self-applause; they brighten upon the review, whilst every reflection is a repetition of the pleasure; but the last is attended with inward perturbations, self-abhorrence, and shame; they will not bear a sober and cool review; but the very idea of them is a real misery. What a degradation of the noble powers of reason and reflection! What a vast stoop to chuse rather to be a brute, than a wise, a happy, and intelligent being! But to proceed with my story.

Mr. Du Bois and his niece gave us their repeated thanks for our making so happy a reconciliation. Soon after dinner was over, they were going to leave us; but, at our request, they staid the rest of the day; and at night we parted with reciprocal expressions of friendship.

I went to bed with my mind filled with a variety of agreeable sensations, and slept till late the next morning; when I awoke, and went to my mother's room; but found her more disordered than ever: she had been constantly attended by a physician for some time; but now he could not give us any hopes that she would ever recover. Several days passed over in which nothing material happened to me: I hardly ever left my mother, who grew worse. Mrs. Dorwin came almost every day to see her, and to comfort me; for my tenderness seemed to increase in proportion as her life grew more in danger. I frequently sat up with her all night, notwithstanding her fears that it would prejudice my health: and, at last, I could hardly bear to be separated from her a moment. Yet, in spite of all my uneasiness, I could not help thinking sometimes of Valville: I found I still loved him; and my heart induced me to excuse him to myself, and made me even almost wish to see him again. Mean while, I found the fatigue I daily underwent was a great deal too much for me; and that, together with the thoughts of losing my mother, had deprived me of the little strength I had recovered since my late illness. I grew pale and weak; my watching and tears had in a great measure extinguished the fire of my eyes; and my vivacity and natural gaiety gave place to a thoughtful sadness.

However, I put a constraint upon myself, and endeavoured to appear as cheerful as possible before my mother; but I could not dissemble so well as to deceive her: she frequently told me that my excessive care and assiduity, though it was an undeniable proof of my affection, gave her real pain. But, for some time, I was unwilling to abate my diligence; I made light of her observation, and told her I only did my duty; and entreated that she would not deny me the satisfaction of attending upon her, since I ardently desired to do it: but, at last, my own weakness, rather than that tender lady's advice, obliged me to desist; for I was brought almost as low as herself. However, I spent all my time with her and Mrs. Dorwin, whose affection for my mother soothed my grief. She sympathized with me; and, in the kindest manner, endeavoured to moderate my sorrow: her solid and judicious discourse never appeared more charming than now; and I began to be resigned to Providence, and to enjoy a good degree of calmness and serenity; when an unexpected event gave a happy turn to my affairs.

One day, as I was sitting with my mother, and had been saying some of those tender things which naturally drop from a heart full of the sincerest friendship and engaging manner, I heard somebody come softly up stairs; the door opened: but how vast was my surprize when I saw Valville enter! Though I had for some days before even wished to see him, I now found I was unable to support the shock of such a sudden, such an unexpected sight. I held my mother's hand in mine; but my nerves seemed to slacken; I let go my hold, and fell senseless upon the floor.

Whether my fainting was owing to my present weakness, which made me unable to bear such a sudden surprize, and support the strange tumult in my soul; or whether it proceeded from the softness of my mind, which had just been melted by my mother's tender endearments, I know not; however, when I recovered, which was not till some time, I found myself in bed in my own room, violently sick and faint; and perceived that in my fall I had received a large contusion in my head, which was already dressed by a surgeon: he

was seated with Mrs. De Valville, who was weeping by my bed-side; and they were surrounded by several maid-servants.

When I opened my eyes, I looked about me; and, greatly surprized at my condition, asked my mamma, with a weak and low voice, where I was, and what had reduced me to that condition: for I had entirely forgot the circumstance of my fainting; and had only a very confused idea of having seen Valville. She satisfied me by answering my request; and, at the same time, desired me to be silent. As I found myself hardly able to speak, I complied with her desire; and remained the rest of the day, and the following night, in a state little different from that from which I had just been recovered. The next day I found myself something better, though I had a violent pain in my head; and, three or four days after, I was able to sit up in my bed. My mother did not think it was yet proper to communicate the news she had to tell me; but a few days after this, when she thought me able to support the emotions her discourse would infallibly occasion in me, she drew near to my bed-side; and, taking hold of my hand—'My dear,' said she, with an air of the utmost tenderness, 'I have surprizing news to tell thee; news which I hope will hasten thy recovery. I do not know whether you took notice of Valville's looks when he came into my room: I did; he entered with an air of submissive respect; and cast a look at thee full of all that tenderness which used to inform his breast when he adored thee with the most passionate fondness; but no words can describe his confusion when he saw thee fall upon the floor. He ran to thee, and snatched thee up in his arms with a look of the utmost distraction: thy face was immediately stained with the blood, which ran upon his cloaths. The servants immediately came running up, and took thee from him; when he took horse, and rode full speed to Paris for a surgeon: he came back, and brought him with him, before thou wast come to thyself. His soul seemed to be tormented with the most violent and frightful agitations; and his grief and despair appeared in every action: when, fearing that his presence would

be of ill consequence, if he should stay till you came to yourself, I entreated him to retire; which your interest made him submit to, though he could not do it without the appearance of the greatest reluctance; but, however, he went no farther than into the anti-chamber, where he staid at thy door, to enquire how thou didst of every one that went out. At last I told him that thou hadst recovered thy senses, and was found to be out of danger: he lifted up his eyes; and, drying away his tears—"O heavens!" cried he in an ecstasy, "does she live? Shall I then be so happy as to persuade her to believe that her virtue and generosity have overcome me, and that I now love her more than ever!"

"Is it possible?" cried I, interrupting her; "is it possible? What a wavering and inconstant disposition! What a contradiction he is to himself! He must be a stranger to love, who can so lightly change the object of it. A slight hurt made him enamoured with me; an ordinary fainting-fit induced him to change his resolution, forsake me, and almost adore another: for he makes it appear that this was his only reason; since, the same incident, attended with a few frightful circumstances, reclaims him, makes him break his former engagements, and regret his abandoning me. A very hopeful lover, truly! The next lady who has a greater misfortune before him, will melt his heart, impress her image there, and infallibly make him her admirer; till another, still more unhappy, shall gain the preference. Poor Valville! how art thou the sport of every irregular impulse! how strangely carried away by every capricious fancy?"

Notwithstanding this exclamation, I cannot positively affirm that this news gave me either pleasure or pain; though I cannot help thinking that I had some secret satisfaction upon it; but it lay hid in some corner of my heart, and might then escape my notice.

"Pray, child, do not judge too rashly," replied my mother, finding I had done; "he may not, perhaps, appear so weak upon a farther examination: come, hear what he had to say for himself, and refer your censures till then. As this exclamation," added she, "seem-

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"ed rather to be dictated by a sudden
 "transport of joy, than directed to me,
 "I was going to leave him, when he
 "cast himself at my feet—" My dear
 "mother," cried he, "I did not hear
 "of your illness till yesterday; if I
 "had, nothing should have prevented
 "my waiting upon you: indeed, I am
 "sincerely afflicted to see you so much
 "altered. I arrived at Paris yesterday
 "about noon, and immediately set out
 "with a design to visit the Marchioness
 "of Kilnare: I went with all the im-
 "patience of a lover, who had been for
 "a long time detained from his mis-
 "tress, in order to engage her to in-
 "vite Miss Varthorn to dinner, that I
 "might have her company there as us-
 "ual; but in my way I was constrain-
 "ed by a friend to step into his house,
 "upon his promising not to detain me.
 "I there found Miss De Fare; I con-
 "fess I could not see her without a con-
 "fusion, which perhaps was too visi-
 "ble, as she had been a witness of
 "some of those tender things I had
 "some time ago said at her mother's
 "to Miss Marianne: however, I sent
 "my request to the Marchioness in a
 "letter, and told her that I should wait
 "upon her in an hour's time. Miss
 "De Fare took an opportunity to in-
 "form me of your illness, and even
 "mentioned the many obligations
 "which Mrs. Dorfin had told her I
 "had to Marianne; particularly her
 "prevailing upon you to pardon my in-
 "constancy, and even to consent to my
 "marrying her rival, as well as her
 "generosity in desiring you not to give
 "her what you had promised in your
 "will. She repeated, as near as she
 "was able, the very words that passed
 "between you. I confess, that at her
 "first mentioning Marianne's name,
 "I was filled with the greatest uneas-
 "iness; and would have been very glad
 "of an excuse to have left the room.
 "But, however, I could find none: but
 "when she mentioned the letter you
 "received from Versailles, I thought
 "myself so interested, that I could not
 "help listening to her with the greatest
 "attention; for I had spent part of the
 "time you had been sending after me,
 "with Miss Varthorn at Paris; and had
 "therefore formed a plausible story to
 "deceive you, in which you would at
 "once have detected me. Here I was,
 "in spite of myself, both surprized and

" charmed; and my admiration con-
 "tinued to rise as she proceeded, to
 "such a degree, that the tears came
 "into my eyes, and I could not help
 "sighing, and feeling a tender pity for
 "that dear generous girl. At last I
 "left her, and thanked her for her in-
 "formation in such a manner, that I
 "am sure she must have taken notice
 "that what she had said had very much
 "affected me. However, I could not
 "dispense with going to Miss Varthorn;
 "but I went with much slower steps
 "than I was going with two hours be-
 "fore, though I had staid an hour long-
 "er than I promised in my letter. I
 "found Miss Varthorn there before me,
 "but did not meet her with that rap-
 "ture which in the morning I had ima-
 "gined would attend such a long-ex-
 "pected interview. No, my mind was
 "frequently absent, and led me to
 "contemplate what I had just heard;
 "and I, that was in an ecstasy for some
 "days before, at the idea of this mo-
 "ment, was obliged to dissemble, lest she
 "should perceive my coldness. After
 "dinner, she happened, amongst other
 "things, to ask what Marianne had to
 "say to me when she conducted me to
 "the arbour: I gave her a particular
 "account of it; but it was not with-
 "out great difficulty that I disguised
 "the emotions it caused in my breast.
 "When I had done, she commended
 "her generosity; but it was with a
 "very cool and indolent air: she then
 "mentioned a letter she had sent to
 "Marianne, to express her gratitude
 "for concealing her share in my in-
 "trigue, and her promise afterwards
 "to see me no more. "The old lady
 "and her daughter were equally cre-
 "dulous," cried she, smiling: "I on-
 "ly meant that I would not see you at
 "the convent; you may see me here
 "as often as you please, if they do not
 "know it. I love you too well to part
 "with you for such a one as she! who,
 "you know, would be a sad disgrace
 "to you," added she, laying her hand
 "upon mine, and smiling in my face.
 "How, Miss!" cried I, "was this
 "expression of your gratitude to de-
 "ceive them? Indeed it was poorly
 "done! Marianne's generous senti-
 "ments deserved, at least, that you
 "should treat her with sincerity, in re-
 "turn for her regard to you." As
 "this, Madam, was spoke with a very
 "serious

"serious air, she could not help shewing
 "her resentment. "I do not know
 "what you mean, Sir," returned she,
 "snatching away her hand with an air
 "of indignation; "I confess you treat
 "me very oddly: what is poorly done?
 "If I have deceived your mother, and
 "that girl! have you any reason to
 "complain? Was not you the cause?
 "Methinks you are very free with
 "your censures! I can tell you, Sir,
 "you must not expect to use me as you
 "have done her: you, at least, ought
 "not to complain of insincerity." I
 "confess, I was quite confounded at
 "this reproach, which was too just not
 "to make a very deep impression upon
 "me: however, I could not bear to
 "hear you both treated with such con-
 "tempt; and therefore endeavoured
 "to make her believe that she greatly
 "injured you, by mentioning several
 "instances of Marianne's generosity.
 "Here her jealousy and pride took the
 "alarm; and her mind, which was all
 "tenderness before, became instantly
 "full of rage; and she assumed such
 "airs, as made me blush for my weak-
 "ness in loving her. She told me, she
 "was sorry she had degraded herself so
 "much as to listen to my addresses;
 "that she was not of a rank that would
 "suffer her conduct to be compared
 "with the character of an orphan, who
 "was probably of a low and ignoble
 "birth; and that she looked upon my
 "treating her thus as the highest af-
 "front. These reproaches had no
 "other effect but to make the amiable
 "Marianne appear still more lovely.
 "What a surprizing contrast!" said I
 "to myself: "how ungrateful have I
 "been to forsake that dear girl, whose
 "tenderness makes her prefer my in-
 "terest to her own, and who only con-
 "sults my felicity!" This reflection
 "made me give her a very cool answer,
 "which was not at all to her satisfac-
 "tion. She cast a look at me full
 "of resentment; and then told me I
 "presumed too much upon her tender-
 "ness, which, she said, she had been
 "fool enough to confess to me; but
 "since she found I did not deserve it,
 "I should no longer impose upon her;
 "and therefore ordered me, in an im-
 "perious tone, to leave her no more:
 "and then flounced out of the room,
 "slinging the door after her. But
 "one thing was very particular; Lob-

"served that, by her manner of leav-
 "ing me, she thought I would call her
 "back; and I was convinced she really
 "expected it, by her stopping at the
 "outside of the door for a minute, to
 "give me an opportunity of doing it;
 "but when she found I kept my seat,
 "and continued silent, I heard her re-
 "tire.

"I was so far from being concern-
 "ed at her ill treatment, that I was
 "really glad I had given her an op-
 "portunity to shew her temper, and
 "therefore only staid to take my leave
 "of the Marchioness, which I did as
 "soon as she entered the room, which
 "was but a moment after; and retir-
 "ed full of the charms of that dear
 "lady, who had first taken possession
 "of my heart. As I went home, I ran
 "over in my mind every thing that
 "Miss De Fare had told me; and I
 "found it so conformable to the sweet-
 "ness of Marianne's disposition, that I
 "could not doubt the truth of the least
 "particular. I hated myself for my
 "ingratitude, and reproached myself
 "every minute for the uneasiness I
 "had given that enchanting creature.
 "How noble and disinterested," said I,
 "is her behaviour! And how could I
 "have the stupidity to forsake her for
 "a lady whose soul is widely different
 "from her's? Oh, am I still dear to
 "her? And may I flatter myself with
 "possessing that amiable girl? I am re-
 "solved to ask her forgiveness, and en-
 "deavour to regain her favour!"

"I heard that a man of quality had
 "made his addresses to her: this news
 "filled me with uneasiness, and made
 "me reproach myself in the severest
 "manner; it was like a dagger to my
 "heart. "I have deserved to lose her,"
 "said I; "I have deserved to be
 "wretched!" I cursed those false
 "friends who had filled me with mis-
 "taken notions of honour, and had
 "made me ashamed of what was ne-
 "cessary to my happiness; ashamed of
 "what ought to have been my glory!
 "And this news seemed to increase my
 "passion, by the difficulty there ap-
 "peared of ever obtaining my desires.
 "Some affairs, Madam, prevented my
 "coming last night; but all my thoughts
 "were here; I longed to cast myself at
 "her feet and yours, and endeavour to
 "obtain forgiveness from both: I
 "longed to testify the sense I have of
 "her

“her goodness; and to find if I was still dear to that charming creature. I entered your room with my mind full of a tender admiration, and yet full of diffidence, and a dread of offending; but I no sooner saw her, than my heart seemed ready to leap from my bosom: but no words can describe the confusion, the fright, the agony of my soul, when I saw the effects of my presence.”

“Oh, mamma!” cried I, “does he then love me again? May I indulge once more the thought of being your daughter indeed? Delightful idea! Shall my miseries be succeeded by such exquisite happiness? No! you will soon be snatched from me; I shall soon be deprived of the dearest part of me! But tell me, mamma, does not the same objection hold good against our union? May he not fear being treated with contempt by his friends? May he not fear their reproaches still? And will not their censures damp our dearest joys, and cool his transports? Will he not blush for entering into engagements which will load him with contumely? Alas! I fear he will.”—“No, I hope not,” my dear, returned she: “thou art dearer to him than ever; he is now drawn to thee, constrained by reason and gratitude; by an esteem that will compel him to love thee; an esteem that time will increase; for the more he knows thee, the greater will be the ascendant thou wilt have over his heart. The officer’s preferring thee to every other of our sex will make him proof against the affronts that may be thrown upon him; and he will be ashamed to appear less hardy than him: he will think, if that gentleman, whose wisdom and good sense is so well known to be called in question, scorns the censure of the ill-judging multitude, he must have an equal reason for doing so too. As for me, I shall not be long here: a witness of your happiness; but it will be a great pleasure to me to see you united before I die: and whilst I live I shall give you both my prayers, for a continuance of your mutual felicity.”—“Dear mamma!” cried I, “I sincerely thank you: but the thoughts of losing you must damp every joy; I can give up my heart to no delight, whilst I see you on the verge of life.

How could you think that I should consent to marry him, when, a moment after, I must part from you? Pray do not suffer the first days of our nuptials to be dashed with grief. Valville’s tenderness, if he loves me dearly, will soothe my anguish for your loss; we shall mingle our tears, and find a sweet sympathy in the most bitter sorrow.”—“Well, my dear,” returned that engaging lady, “I will not press you too much; I will be satisfied if you resolve to conclude it after my decease: I know thy tenderness will induce thee to pay a decent respect to my memory; but do not carry it too far; thy affliction will be of no service to me; let the prospect of your approaching happiness dry up your tears. But my son waits to see you,” added she, smiling; and, I think, I may desire him to come in, since a reconciliation between you is so far advanced.”

Upon this, she went out, and presently returned with Valville; who entered with some confusion, and threw himself on his knee at my bed-side. “Miss,” said he, with a timorous voice, “you cannot wonder if I do not know how to approach you without trembling. I am ashamed of my own inconsistency; an inconsistency which your beauty and goodness render altogether inexcusable. I will not pretend to offer any apologies as an alleviation of my guilt; no, my behaviour will admit of none; they would only render me more detestable. I confess myself, dear Miss, unworthy of that regard you have constantly shewn me; absolutely unworthy of having the least pretensions to your friendship. But, since your amiable conduct has opened my eyes, let me tell you how much I owe to you; let me express my gratitude, and thank you, in the sincerest terms, for that tender regard you have shewn to me; for that concern you have always expressed for my happiness, even whilst I was acting inconsistent with my honour, and those engagements which ought to have made me inviolably yours: a noble return for falsehood and deceit! a glorious instance of that rectitude of heart which is proof against every passion that is an enemy to virtue! You now see me full of remorse; full of the deepest con-

fusion

' fusion for having offended you: and,
 ' if you have any degree of resentment
 ' lurking in that pure heart, you have
 ' now an opportunity of satisfying it,
 ' by beholding a mind distracted with
 ' it's own folly without a pitying eye.
 ' But you have a soul too great to har-
 ' bour revenge: then what is mine,
 ' that has offended against such consum-
 ' mate virtue! Oh, that I could atone
 ' for the uneasiness I have given you,
 ' or make you forget my infidelity!
 ' I deserve your hatred; and merit
 ' only to be treated with contempt and
 ' scorn. I feel the most ardent passion,
 ' without daring to hope that you will
 ' ever consent to make me happy. Even
 ' my return to you, and love, has been
 ' attended with circumstances the most
 ' shocking and dreadful: my presence,
 ' like that of a hateful monster, has
 ' caused the most terrible and shock-
 ' ing effects, and has even almost cost
 ' you your life, at a time when it was
 ' dearer to me than ever. What an-
 ' guish has your illness occasioned!
 ' With what cruel torments has it filled
 ' my distracted mind!' Here Mrs. De
 ' Valville interrupted him—' You have
 ' no reason,' said she, ' to make such
 ' cruel investigations against yourself:
 ' Marianne has never ceased to love
 ' you; and, I dare say, she will readily
 ' pardon your fault, since you yourself
 ' are so very sensible of it.'

I confess, I could not see Valville at
 my feet, and hear him say such tender
 things, without being touched, and
 melting into a softness which made me
 unable to interrupt him. I heard him
 with an inward satisfaction; and felt,
 while he spoke, the most delicious sen-
 sations: however, I thought I ought
 not to let him too soon into the disposi-
 tion of my heart. ' I do not know,'
 ' Sir,' replied I, finding Mrs. De Val-
 ville and he were both silent; ' I do not
 ' know what return I ought to make
 ' to your professions of love: I confess
 ' you are still very dear to me; but how
 ' must I know that your heart is sin-
 ' cere? What reason have you to think
 ' that marrying me will be less dan-
 ' gerous to your repose than you have
 ' before thought it? Will not our
 ' union be attended with misery to us
 ' both? Will you not be ashamed of a
 ' marriage that will degrade you in the
 ' opinion of the world? Will not their
 ' scorn make you hate me, as being ac-

' cessary to your ruin? This is an evil
 ' I ought to fear; and the very idea of
 ' rendering you unhappy is enough to
 ' make me shut myself up in a convent
 ' for life. Oh, Sir! consider what you
 ' are doing! Consider whether you have
 ' any solid reasons to change those
 ' sentiments which have made you re-
 ' solve to abandon me! Is there not the
 ' same reason you should do so now as
 ' ever? Besides, Sir, can a slight quarrel
 ' justify your forsaking Miss Varthon?
 ' How do I know but your return
 ' may proceed rather from your resent-
 ' ment to her, than from any new mo-
 ' tives of love to me? I assure you, I
 ' am too tender of your honour and
 ' happiness to contribute to your doing
 ' any thing inconsistent with either.'—
 ' Ah, Miss!' cried he, in the most
 ' moving tone, at the same time taking
 ' my hand, and pressing it between his;
 ' pray do not sink me deeper in de-
 ' spair! I have been deluded by false
 ' notions of honour and interest; and,
 ' in pursuit of a shadow, have acted
 ' contrary to both; contrary to true
 ' honour, and my most perfect interest:
 ' I have been persuaded to abandon
 ' you; and foolishly consented to do it,
 ' even while you were very dear to my
 ' heart; and I have met with some suc-
 ' cess. I have endeavoured to divert
 ' my passion by changing the object;
 ' but your generosity, in offering me
 ' your assistance, disconcerted my
 ' schemes, and made me unable to think
 ' of your rival without making a com-
 ' parison which was greatly to your ad-
 ' vantage: but I have endeavoured to
 ' stifle the impression it made upon my
 ' mind, till I heard the surprizing effects
 ' of your goodness in my absence; that
 ' recalled all my tenderness, and re-
 ' vived every soft impression. I could
 ' not bear to hear Miss Varthon treat
 ' you with contempt; every disrespect-
 ' ful word was like a dagger to my
 ' soul: I was shocked at her ingrati-
 ' tude and hypocrisy, and astonished
 ' to find she was able to impose upon
 ' you under a shew of friendship. I
 ' detested her ungenerous baseness: I
 ' saw my folly, and blushed to see how
 ' I had been deluded by my pretended
 ' friends; and resolved to throw my-
 ' self upon your mercy. The supposed
 ' misfortunes that would attend our
 ' union are vain and silly chimeras;
 ' your virtue and integrity, your piety

‘and good-sense, would make the lowest state of life preferable to the highest with any other woman: and, might I be so happy as to possess your tenderest affections, I would look with contempt even upon a crown; and not all the riches and honours of the universe should shake my resolution of being eternally yours!’

I could not forbear giving a sigh at these tender expressions; but it was a sigh unmixed with the least tincture of uneasiness, except what was occasioned by my putting a constraint upon myself to conceal my satisfaction; and only proceeded from the streams of delight which poured into my mind. Mrs. De Valville easily perceived the situation of my heart. ‘My dear,’ said she, with her eyes full of the most melting joy, ‘Valville must be for ever thine, since he has learned to do justice to thy merit. Come, give me thy hand.’ I held it out to her immediately; she pressed it between hers; and then, suddenly taking hold of Valville’s, put my hand into his. ‘My children,’ continued she, ‘may you be mutually happy! May this union be crowned with lasting felicity, and the most durable delights; delights uninterrupted by anxious care, and every painful inquietude!—My son, possess the virtuous Marianne!’ added she, giving him a tender look; ‘imitate her goodness, her fidelity, and learn to set a just value upon those perfections, which will render your felicity solid and permanent. Her study will be to make you happy; may yours be to render her so!’

My dear mother’s heart seemed here too full to permit her to say any more; some tears gushed from her eyes, and trickled down her cheeks; and she pressed our hands together; for she still held Valville’s and mine between hers. Then recovering herself, she resumed—‘My dear children, I shall now leave you with comfort, since I can wish you no greater happiness in this life than what I see you in the prospect of: you will be both settled in such a manner as to render your situation very agreeable; you have virtue, and love to sweeten life; and a great estate, which will not only procure you all the conveniences of it, but give you the power of tasting the exalted pleasure of doing good. You

may make the gloom vanish from the troubled brow; you may make the orphan and the widow sing for joy, and the afflicted and disconsolate exult in transports of delight.—And ‘may you, my dear daughter,’ added she, looking upon me in a manner that was prodigiously affecting, ‘have many pledges of your mutual love! May they all share thy virtues, and transmit them down to posterity! O may Heaven smile upon your joys, and pour down its blessings upon you!’

These expressions were too affecting to render it possible for either of us to make an immediate reply: we appeared equally moved; the tears streamed from our eyes for some time; we were melted down, and almost seemed as if we had been filled with some severe affliction. At last, Valville began—‘Dear Madam—dear Miss!’ cried he, with a sudden joy breaking through his tears; ‘what shall I say to express the sentiments of my heart? How shall I describe the pleasing, painful tumult that fills my soul? I am borne down with the weight of my own happiness; my transports are too violent to be endured!—Does this dear, this charming creature, love me still? Hast thou forgot my ingratitude? my barbarous, my vile ingratitude!’—‘Pray, Sir, mention it no more,’ interrupted I; ‘I have nothing to reproach you with. I am still the same; and I do not blush to tell you, that you have been always dear to me; infinitely dearer than life itself; no other person would ever be able to make an impression upon my heart, which has never ceased to be yours.’ The tender emotions of my soul had here exhausted my spirits; and it was with some difficulty I pronounced these last words loud enough to be heard: I was still too weak to endure such violent agitations; and found myself ready to sink under the tender ideas which filled my mind. My mamma had let go our hands, and walked to the window to dry away her tears: but I still suffered Valville to hold mine without endeavouring to draw it from him; he pressed it to his breast, and then to his lips, without seeming to know what he did. My mother soon returned, and told her son that it was time to leave me to recover myself, and that I ought to take a little rest: she then embraced us both
in

in the most affectionate manner; and, desiring Valville to attend her, constrained him to leave me.

What surprizing vicissitudes attend human life! How swift is the transition from grief to joy! and how nearly do these opposite sensations bear a resemblance! for, when pleasure grows excessive, it becomes nearly allied to pain. As all happiness subsists in the soul, the mind must be in a disposition fit to attend to it, and, by reflection, to carry it as near to perfection as possible. In order to this, our minds must enjoy a great degree of tranquillity; for whatever disturbs them, destroys that self-enjoyment which is the basis of all human felicity. Excessive transports of joy, or a too sudden transition from the extremes of grief to those of the contrary passion, are too violent to be of any long continuance; they are like a sudden blaze, which scorches and fills the body with pain, while a moderate heat would refresh and enliven it.

I do not know, Madam, whether you are of the same opinion or no; but, if you are not, it can only proceed from want of reflecting upon the nature of your mind, and observing the effects of its emotions: for, in this respect, all minds, I am persuaded, are the same; and in every breast a placid serenity and inward composure, and the delightful sensations which proceed from those ideas which charm the soul, and all its passions, into a pleasing harmony, is the highest pitch of human felicity.

I soon found that these violent agitations had considerably weakened me; and was so disordered, that, had not a servant entered almost as soon as my mother left me, and given me a few drops in a little wine, I should infallibly have fainted away. My dear Valville and his mother were present before me all the rest of the day, and the following night; and my imagination repeated, over and over, every tender endearment. Methought I still saw his confusion; attended to the melting sounds of love, and heard them both repeat, with the utmost affection, every endearing expression: but, about break of day, I dropped asleep, and did not awake till noon; when I found myself a little refreshed. I now began to regard Valville as if he had already been my husband; and looked upon my mamma's joining our hands in that

tender manner as a kind of marriage. He saw me every day; my mind became insensibly more calm; and, in a short time, I was pretty well recovered. But, alas! Mrs. De Valville grew daily worse, and was soon obliged to keep her bed: Mrs. Dorfin and Miss De Fare came frequently to see her; and congratulated me on our happiness, at the same time that they endeavoured to enable me to support the loss of my dear mother. I was under too many engagements to these ladies for the share they had in our reconciliation not to make them a suitable return. I had the satisfaction, too, sometimes to see the officer; who, notwithstanding his own passion, expressed a generous pleasure at our union, and let me know that he prized my felicity above his own; or rather, that my happiness made the greatest part of his own. But, alas! my dear, dear mother's condition, damped all my joy; a separation from her was a severe stroke that required all my resolution and fortitude to enable me to bear. Since Valville's post was sold to another, he was under no obligation to leave us; we therefore spent great part of our time together in my mother's room, and endeavoured mutually to comfort each other; we mingled our tears, and had a soft and pleasing sympathy in our affliction.

One day, as we were seated near her bed-side, she ordered the servants to leave the room; and then, desiring us to come near—'My dear children,' said she, in a slow and weak voice, 'I shall soon bid you a long adieu; but you must not lament my loss with an immoderate grief: I know I have been a tender mother to you; and therefore believe you will not be able to part with me without pain. I am leaving a world surrounded with many and various uneasinesses, to which the frail state of human nature is always liable: but I shall soon arrive in the world of happy beings; a world where peace and eternal joy reign without interruption! Do not let your tears seem to say you envy my happiness; do not wish me deprived of the noblest felicity, for no other reason but to indulge your fondness to me here: that would be unkind and cruel!' Here she paused; then recovering herself—'May you live, and be a blessing to the world!'

refused the: 'and, O my son! steadily adhere to the practice of virtue; dare to oppose yourself to the licentious customs of a degenerate age; and, by your example, endeavour to stem the torrent of vice. Do not blush to own your obligations to that great Being who fills the universe with the wondrous exertions of his wisdom and power; give him your highest esteem, your highest reverence and supreme regard: let your devotion to him spring from gratitude; and never mention his name without a respectful and humble awe; regard his favour as the highest blessing, and endeavour to imitate his moral character, and to follow the bright example which the blessed Author of our religion has set before us.' Then, taking breath a little—'Believe me, my son,' continued she, 'a mind conscious of its own innocence and integrity, enjoys a most refined and rational delight; it bears, with a serene composure, the various unavoidable misfortunes of life; looks into a future state with pleasure; and even could smile amidst the groans of expiring nature.'

These last words were spoke so very low, that we could scarce hear them: she seemed quite spent; and, after pulling us both to her, to embrace us, she repeated her wishes that we might be mutually happy; and then endeavoured to take some rest. We were greatly moved at this discourse; and went into another room to indulge our grief. Valville eagerly kissed the falling tears from my cheeks, and then laid his face to mine; while our souls seemed to mingle like those dewy drops, our griefs, our cares, our pains, the same.

But, Madam, I must break off. The remembrance of this tender scene has, I am afraid, rendered these last paragraphs almost unintelligible: I cannot think of this dear lady's death without melting into a flood of tears; and to them you must ascribe all those blots which have stained my paper.

How difficult, Madam, is it to support ourselves under such severe afflictions! afflictions which require the greatest efforts of reason and philosophy to enable us to behave under them with any degree of constancy and resolution, when the mind is oppressed with the frightful apprehensions of lose-

ing some beloved object! It is in vain to hope for succour from those ideas which interfere with the tender sensations of the heart, since all its impulses are blind, and spring only from its passions: the soul infallibly turns itself to the objects of the mind, while the cool dictates of reason have not the power of affecting it.

Valville and I were quite inconsolable at the apprehensions of suddenly losing my dear mother: her tender discourses, and moral exhortations, set her death before our eyes in the most painful light; and, instead of giving us that comfort she desired, only made us more sensible of the greatness of our loss, and more unable to bear up under it. My grief seemed to increase as she drew nearer her end; and Valville, who feared the effects of it, employed all his endeavours to give me that comfort which he wanted himself.

My mamma began now to be too weak to give us any more advice; and could only express her tenderness by kissing me, squeezing my hand, and then lifting up a dying look to Heaven, as if she was praying for our happiness. One morning I was waked out of my sleep by a noise and bustle among the servants: I no sooner opened my eyes, but I cried out—'Alas! she is dead!' and then fainted away. My conjecture was but too true; for I no sooner came to myself, than, finding every thing quiet, I rang the bell for a servant: one of them immediately came into my room with her eyes swelled with crying. I needed no more to satisfy me that my fears were too well grounded; however, I asked her if my mamma was not dead. 'Do not fright yourself, Miss,' said she, turning away her head; 'she is much better than she was last night.' And then she retired. This was spoke with a trembling voice; she was too much affected to conceal the sad news from me; for all the servants lamented her, as having lost a sincere friend, whom they tenderly loved. But how unaccountable are the sensations of our minds! Though I had been hitherto deaf to every reflection that did not tend to increase my grief, I no sooner heard that she was really dead, but I felt myself inspired with more courage than I ever expected, and perceived myself

myself in a more calm and resigned disposition. 'Then she is happy!' cried I: 'she now reaps the fruits of her virtue and piety! Blessed spirit! When shall we meet again to part no more? When shall I lay down this feeble frame, and share with you in the sublimer joys of immortal beings? When taste your pleasures, and share in your pure delights?—O my God! may this prospect fire my ambition, and make me endeavour to imitate her virtues, that I may enjoy her transports!' I was thus raising myself above my afflictions, by these motives of consolation, when Valville entered my room with a countenance perfectly disordered: he had been up some time, and had heard me ring; and therefore came to share with me in my grief, that we might ease our hearts by giving a loose to the tender emotions of nature. He saw at once that I had been acquainted with the melancholy news: when, taking hold of my hand—'My dear Marianne,' said he, 'what a dreadful loss is this! May Heaven enable thee to support it!'—'Dreadful, indeed!' returned I: 'but yet, since it cannot be recovered, let us endeavour to behave consistent with our hopes as Christians.'—'May we ever do so, my dear!' replied Valville: 'and, since she is happy, let us not think that we are miserable.' We thus endeavoured for some time to console each other, till it was time for me to arise, when he left me.

In the afternoon Mrs. Dorfin and Miss De Fare came to see me, in order to soothe my grief by sharing it with me. Valville, unknown to me, had sent a servant to acquaint them with our affliction, and to desire their company: and this day was spent in a manner suitable to the solemn occasion. Methought there was something extremely engaging in this soft and tender sympathy of souls, where every one wept as if they had lost a mother: every thing about us had the face of

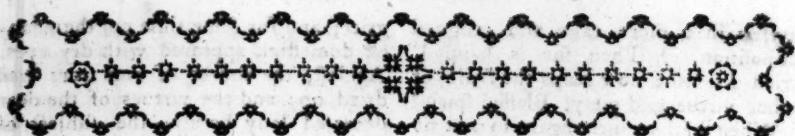
grief; and for some time not the meanest domestick appeared with dry eyes. At last, the source of our tears was dried up; and the virtues of the dear deceased lady became the subject of our conversation; when Mrs. Dorfin mentioned a hundred instances that evidenced the greatness of her soul, and proved the vast extent of her generosity and compassion, most of which I had hitherto been unacquainted with. When she had done—'What a glorious example has she left us to excite our emulation!' said Valville, taking hold of my hand, with an air the most tender and affecting. 'May it be our care, my dear, to follow her steps; and may we always express the same sweetness and benevolence to those who deserve our assistance!'—'Alas, Sir!' replied I, 'I fear I shall fall very far short of her in these amiable perfections; though I shall strive to come as near her as possible.'

In the evening, these two charming ladies, after using their endeavours to reconcile us to our loss, prepared to leave us. 'O Madam!' said I to Mrs. Dorfin, 'I cannot help being very sensible of this severe affliction: methinks I feel a vacancy in my breast. That dear, lovely woman, has bid us a long adieu; and I have no sooner tasted the sweetness of having a mother, than she is torn from me.' At this, Mrs. Dorfin clasped me in her arms—'My dear,' said she, 'think that I am your mother; indeed I have an affection for thee which exceeds all bounds: you shall be my daughter, my friend, and all that is most dear to me.' She then embraced me; when Miss De Fare took this opportunity to give me the most tender assurances of her affection.

But as I am weary of writing, and willing to divert my thoughts a little from this gloomy subject, I shall leave, Madam, the continuation of my story to the Tenth Part.

END OF THE NINTH PART.

THE



THE

VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

PART X.



Hope, Madam, you are now a little better satisfied with my unfaithful lover, and begin to think him not quite such a monster as you falsely imagined him to be. If you assert still, that he has his faults, that is only saying he is a man; for imperfection and human nature have a necessary connection; and they only are wise, who, when they are sensible of an error, know how to set about a reformation immediately: but, though he was to blame in this instance, yet he has a number of virtues that render his character perfectly amiable; and, I assure you, this instance of ill-conduct has been of the highest service to him; and has, perhaps, rendered us more durably happy than we should have been, had he never offended.

As soon as my mother's funeral was over, I thought it advisable to shut myself up in my convent for some time. This I was prompted to by the melancholy disposition of my mind, which made me in love with a retirement, where I might indulge my reflections without interruption; besides, I considered that it would not now be decent to live any longer in the house with Valville till after our marriage: but, as this resolution opposed his desire of spending his time with me, he applied to Mrs. Dorfin; who proposed my living with her, and used so many arguments to persuade me to it, that I could not absolutely refuse her; and therefore promised to stay in the convent only a month, where I might receive her visits, and have the satisfaction of seeing Val-

ville, in her company, as often as she pleased.

In fine, Mrs. Dorfin carried me to the convent; when, after paying my respects to the abbess, and letting her know that Providence had deprived me of my dear mother, I went to my friend the nun's apartment, who rejoiced to see me: she desired me to sit down; said a great many tender things to comfort me for my loss; and I then told her, in few words, what had passed during my absence; only omitting my adventure with Miss Du Bois, which I was resolved to keep secret.

When I had done, she told me she would defer congratulating me on my reconciliation with my lover till I was in a situation of mind that would render such discourses more agreeable to me: she then said that Miss Varthon had received orders from her mother to follow her to England, and that she had left the convent the day before. As I had now nothing to fear from Valville's inconstancy, this piece of news was, on his account, neither able to give me pleasure nor pain; but yet the reflection that I should not be obliged to mortify her by my presence, was a satisfaction that suited with my delicacy; for I easily conceived that, after what had passed, it would be impossible for her to see me without a confusion that I had not the least inclination to give her.

When I retired to my room, I ran over in my mind all the tender scenes which had passed between my dear mother and me, and enumerated the repeated instances of her goodness; whilst my soul successively felt the various sensations

sensations that at different times had possessed it. I then turned my thoughts upon myself; but here how different appeared the scene! how widely different my character from hers! 'What extravagant, ridiculous vanity! what a complication of pride and folly! Oh! how unlike her simplicity!' said I to myself. 'How ridiculous is it for a reasonable being to indulge a fondness for dress and splendor! What an insipid gratification is this to a mind that is capable of the sublimest joys! O my dear mother! may I entirely conquer this constitutional folly! may I form myself by your example; and disdain, like you, to stoop so low as to indulge the trifling foibles of my sex!—My dear mother,' cried I again, 'is now in the possession of those delights which she so lately set before me: she no sooner forsook her feeble, tottering frame, than she found herself arising into new life; the clouds of death were dispersed; and, instead of pain and weakness, she found herself clothed with unfading beauty, immortal health and vigour, and in the noblest exercise of all her reasoning faculties. But, alas! shall not I fall very far short of her joys? And will not my follies make me incapable of rising to so great a degree of felicity? Will not she blush to see me so far beneath her?—O my God!' added I, 'strengthen my resolutions to imitate her bright example!'

With these thoughts I sunk to sleep; and the next morning awoke with a mind full of tranquillity. I spent part of the day with my friend the nun, and several of the boarders. One of these ladies, perhaps, observing that my affliction for Mrs. De Valville's loss was too great to suffer me to take any delight in a promiscuous conversation, endeavoured to divert me, and make me cheerful, by assuming an air of gaiety; and, with much vivacity, began to display her wit: but, alas! I was incapable of relishing any discourse that did not soothe my grief; her conversation became intolerably burdensome to me. I desired her to forbear, and entreated her to change a conversation which the disposition of my mind rendered insupportable. At this she burst into a laugh; and desired me to consider, that, though I had

lost a friend, I had found a lover; and she thought I had made such a happy exchange, that I had no reason to complain. Here I could not help weeping; but made her no answer; when several of the company perceiving my tears, appeared affected, and cast down their eyes. This young lady seemed pleased with what she had said; but looking round, and perceiving she had her laugh to herself, she blushed, and was quite disconcerted: when my friend the nun, after giving me a look full of affection, cried—'It is cruel to offer that joy to the afflicted which they cannot taste; it is like insulting our grief; and, instead of alleviating our sorrows, is the only way to render the mind inconsolable.—Believe me, Miss,' added she, addressing herself to the young lady, who seemed still more confounded at her reproof, 'mirth is always unreasonable to a sorrowful mind; wit then grows distasteful, and is like music "when time is broke, and no proportion kept."—'I thank you, Madam,' returned she; 'if I have offended, it was not for want of regard to Miss Marianne; and, as my intention was only to dissipate her gloom, I hope she will be so good as to excuse my taking a wrong method of doing it. And then,' added she, smiling, 'I shall not be very sorry for having behaved ill; since it has been the occasion of a reproof that will prevent my ever being guilty of the like fault again. But, to be serious, Miss,' continued she, 'I do not think you can have such vast cause for affliction; and, sure, it is not unreasonable to imagine that your happiness should, indeed, counterbalance it, and render it less insupportable.'—'I grant,' said I, 'in some measure, it does so; but you must be a stranger to the dear deceased lady's virtues, to think I can reflect that I must see her no more without the severest grief. How hard is it,' continued I, with a sigh, 'to break those ties which are founded on friendship and reason! A mind that is at ease can easily offer motives of consolation, and range a thousand arguments which it thinks unanswerable; but these motives do not reach the heart which is incapable of banishing its passions.'

Here I was interrupted by a lay-sister, who came to tell me that two persons waited

waited for me in the parlour; at which all the ladies rose up, took their leave of me, and retired to their respective apartments. I went down; and, as I expected, found Mr. De Valville and Mrs. Dorfin waiting for me. 'My dear,' said the latter, 'I have brought a lover, who is doubly disconsolate: he comes to entreat you to pity him; and desires me to entreat you not to deprive him of your company at a time when the situation of his mind renders your absence most insupportable. I must join with him in repeating my request, that you would immediately leave the convent, and accept of my house: you may there have an opportunity of comforting each other. It would be unkind to deny us such a reasonable demand.'—'I do not know what answer to make you, Madam,' returned I. 'I should be very sorry to give either of you the least pain: and, I assure you, I did not chuse this retreat out of any desire to shun either yours, or Mr. De Valville's company; but purely from a regard to decency, and to prevent censure. And, though I flattered myself with the thoughts that I should here have an opportunity to indulge my grief, yet I could not separate myself from you without a great deal of reluctance. Besides, you know I had not taken leave of my convent; the abbess expected me every day to return to it again; and my mother's death rendered it proper that I should take this opportunity of doing it, that I might let her know of my intention to leave them, before I did it altogether.' Here Valville lifted up his eyes with an air of satisfaction.—'O my dear Marianne!' said he; 'you will accompany us, then; will not you? We shall drive directly to this lady's house; she may speak to the abbess immediately, and you will soon be ready.'—'No, Sir,' returned I; 'you are too precipitate, as there is no apparent reason for our being in such haste; we must defer my going till to-morrow at least; mean time, I will prepare for my departure, and bid my friends adieu.' Mrs. Dorfin thought me in the right, and went to meet the abbess in another parlour. As soon as we were alone, Valville addressed me with the most tender and affecting air. 'My dear,' said he, 'did you

know how insupportable this short absence has been to me; was you sensible how heavily the lazy hours have passed along, I am sure you would pity me: you might then, my lovely charmer, form some idea of the sincerity and excess of my passion.'—'I believe it sincere, Sir,' returned I; 'and I love to hear you tell me so: but let us defer, for some time, these kind of discourses; I ought yet to entertain no ideas but such as relate to my dear mamma; we will talk of her virtues till we plant them in our minds, and we shall find some consolation in mingling our cares.'—'What, my dear!' cried he; 'can we talk of her without mentioning our passion, which was so agreeable to her, and which she blessed with her expiring breath? Were not our affairs more at her heart than those which more immediately concerned herself? Our love and her tenderness are so interwoven, that we shall never be able to consider them separately long together.'

This discourse lasted till Mrs. Dorfin returned, when she told me the abbess desired to speak with me; and then, after some affectionate caresses, retired, with my dear Valville, who handed her down stairs. They were no sooner gone than I went to wait upon the abbess; who, after making me sit down by her, told me she was very sorry I was going to leave her—'My dear child,' said she, 'as thou art a person of reason and prudence, I was in hopes that thou wouldst have taken the veil; but, alas! poor girl! thou dost not know what thou art doing; thou art unacquainted with the snares of a worldly life, and therefore art running into temptations. That beauty,' added she, 'was never designed to be thrown away on a mortal: no, Heaven made thee for itself; and thou shouldst consecrate thy charms to him that gave them thee. Here thou mightest devote thyself to the contemplation and enjoyment of God. What an acceptable sacrifice thou wouldst be to him! The Blessed Virgin, whose beauty, while on earth, exceeded that of the children of men; and who, happy woman! held her God to her breast, and gave suck to the Prince of Peace; she, I say, will smile on thy vows, and bless thee

with

‘with her favour; nay, she will command her Son to bless thee too, and thou wilt be ravished with the sweetness of his love.’ Mrs. De Valville loved thee; and, I suppose, has left thee great part of her estate: and how canst thou bestow it better than by securing a place in Heaven with it, which thou wilt certainly do by settling it upon a convent.’ I could not help smiling at this religious cant, this monstrous profanation of sacred things to the sordid views of interest and a vile spirit of covetousness: I reflected, while she was speaking, upon the tender reception she gave me when I offered myself before Mrs. De Valville; the flattering epithets she so liberally bestowed upon me; and the cold reception she afterwards gave me, when she found I desired to be admitted out of charity. ‘I confess, Madam,’ returned I as soon as she had done, ‘I am not able to enter into the engagements you propose to me; my affections are not sufficiently weaned from the things of this world, to render it possible for me to forsake them all at once. Besides, Madam, I am not certain that the lady you mention has left me any thing.’ This I could safely say, because Valville had forbore mentioning the contents of the will to me; and I expected this declaration would make her change her tone, and have greater weight with her than any arguments I could make use of: but I was mistaken; she informed me, that Mrs. Dorfin had told her that my mother had left me something considerable; and then made use of all the arguments she could think of to persuade me to believe that her care for my soul induced her to wish that I would lay out my estate in the manner she proposed; since that alone, she said, could procure me the most solid happiness in this life, as well as eternal felicity in the next. I thanked her for interesting herself so much in my happiness; told her I would consider on what she had said; and went away very well pleased that I had disengaged myself from such a troublesome visit.

It being a very fine evening, I no sooner left the abbess, than I went to take a walk in the garden: the winds were still, and the evening perfectly calm; the sun had just sunk beneath the horizon, and given way to the solemn

shades of the approaching night. I walked here for some time, indulging an agreeable contemplation, and then retired to my own apartment. In my way I happened to meet the haughty lady of quality I have mentioned already; who, with a sneer, told me she heard I was about taking the veil; and was very glad to find I had formed such a resolution; and hoped I would renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world with a good grace. ‘Perhaps, Miss,’ said I, ‘you may be mistaken; I assure you I have no such design.’—‘Nay,’ said she, ‘I think you cannot do better; and there can be no great mortification in resigning the pleasures of life, when we have no probability of our ever tasting them: I hope, my pretty creature! you are not so vain as to think that Valville will ever marry you.’ I made her no answer; but retired to my chamber a little nettled. My friend the nun hearing me shut the door, rapped softly at it; on which I opened it, and she came in. ‘The abbess,’ said she, ‘has spread a report that she has almost prevailed upon you to be a nun; and as she has found you have a fortune to bestow upon her house, I know she will spare no pains to make you one of us: she knows how your affairs stand with Mr. De Valville; and, I am afraid, she will endeavour to make a breach between you, that she may remove all obstacles that may prevent her from putting her designs in execution; therefore do not be prevailed upon to stay any longer than you can help. I should, my dear,’ added she, ‘esteem your company as a great blessing; but I know I cannot obtain it without your being miserable; and I have too much friendship for you, to prefer my satisfaction to the happiness of your whole life. Beware of her artifices; and more especially guard yourself against her flattery and pretended tenderness: it is deceitful; and you would find too soon, that it is only a pretence to keep you in her power. Disbelieve every thing she says, and you will be out of danger; but if you give any credit to her, you will be undone.’ I thanked her for her advice; she wished me a good night, and was going to leave me, when I desired her to stay a little longer; and repeated what the

haughty young lady had said to me just before I entered the room. 'I am more than ever convinced that my suspicions are just,' said she, as soon as I had done. 'Miss Varthon no sooner quarrelled with Valville, than she made this lady, who is your professed enemy, her confidante; they were ever together till she left Paris, and has been heard to say many ill-natured things of you: but, what is very remarkable, is, that as soon as you left the abbess, she was sent for to her, and came away just as you met her; and, by what she said, I believe they had been contriving how to make you suspect your lover's constancy. Pray, take care that you are not imposed on: I will assure you, you are in more danger than you imagine; stand therefore upon your guard; for you may be sure I would not give you these cautions only to terrify you.' She then wished me again a good repose, and retired.

All these cautions alarmed me extremely; I did not know what to think; and soon found that my mind could entertain other ideas than those of grief for the loss of my dear mother. I before thought myself secure of Valville; and imagined that I had nothing to do now but to wait till a decent respect to her memory would permit us to think of our own happiness: but my fears of being deprived of him awakened a variety of quite different sensations in my breast; and I spent great part of the night in confirming my resolution of refusing to take the veil, and in fortifying myself against all the arguments they could make use of.

The next day I heard nothing from the abbess; and though I expected Mrs. Dorfin to come for me in her coach, and waited impatiently to see her, yet I was disappointed: however, my friend the nun endeavoured to comfort me; and at night told me, that the abbess had sent a letter to Mrs. Dorfin's by a servant; and, at the same time, assured me, that, as almost every one in the house loved me, nothing could be done without our being informed of it; and made me hope that I should soon get out of their hands; but, at the same time, desired me not to seem to suspect any thing, but pretend to believe every thing the abbess should say to me.

This night I was much more uneasy

than the former; I knew not how to behave; I burst into tears, and lamented my unhappy condition. 'Shall I never know an end of my miseries?' cried I. 'I was born to be wretched; and must expect always to continue so! Is it not enough that I have lost my mamma, but I must lose Valville too? Must I be stripped at once of all that is dear to me? robbed of every comfort, and never enjoy a moment's solid repose? But why do I despair?' added I; 'has not Providence hitherto extricated me out of greater difficulties? Valville, sure, cannot be long imposed upon: and Mrs. Dorfin is too wise, has too much penetration, to be long the dupe of their wicked artifices. Good God!' continued I, with a deep sigh, 'disappoint the designs of my enemies!'

The next morning I arose with a mind perfectly disordered; and was no sooner dressed, than the abbess sent word that she desired I would breakfast with her. I wiped my eyes, and resolved to dissemble my uneasiness as much as possible. As I entered her room, she threw her arms about my neck, and kissed me. 'My dear,' said she, 'thou dost not know how much I love thee; and, I am sure, thou canst not imagine how sorry I am at the thoughts that thou wilt leave me.—O Blessed Lady! how shall I bear the loss of this dear child!—But come, daughter, sit down; I was afraid thou wouldst leave us yesterday; but am very glad thou hast changed thy mind. Hast thou considered what I said to thee? And may I flatter myself that I have contributed to thy resolution of staying a day or two longer with us? O that thou didst but know the snares of this wicked world!' added she, without giving me time to answer her; 'thou wouldst not court thy misery by going into it; but wouldst gladly chuse this peaceful retirement, where thou mightest give up thy thoughts to the sweet delights that would always attend thee in the practice of thy duty. The world, child, is a sink of iniquity and sin; and it is impossible to continue virtuous in it; and there are few or none that ever get to Heaven who have not spent their lives in a convent. Alas! how should I pity thee to see thee exposed to the solaces of a worldly life! What a pity is it,

that

‘that such a beautiful angel should be miserable for ever! Oh, how my heart bleeds for thee!’ Here she wiped her eyes, and was silent. While she ran on in this hypocritical strain, my heart was so full of resentment, that it was with the utmost difficulty I contained myself; however, I endeavoured to appear sensible of her pretended goodness; but I did it in such an awkward manner, that I am persuaded she must have guessed at the disposition of my mind.

‘Madam,’ said I, ‘I am perfectly sensible of your kindness, and shall always esteem it as I ought; but you know I must not engage myself in an affair of such consequence, without advising with my friends.’—‘Thy friends, child! what friends?’ cried she hastily. ‘Thou hast lost Mrs. De Valville, who was a sincere friend to thee. Ah, poor woman! she is gone! She used to tell me how happy she should be, could she see you take the veil: thou canst not now consult her; she was thy only friend; and on that account I shall pray for her as long as I live.’—‘Did Mrs. De Valville tell you so, Madam?’ returned I. ‘I did not think she had any thoughts of making me a nun.’—‘Yes, but she had though,’ replied she, ‘ever since Valville was false to thee; and really was mightily concerned about it.’—‘But, Madam,’ replied I, ‘as she is dead, I must advise with Mrs. Dorfin, to whose charge she left me.’—‘Thou art in the right,’ returned she: ‘and here is a letter thou mayest give her for Mr. De Valville, who sent it for Miss Varthon; but she was gone before we received it.’—‘I will give it her, to be sure, mother,’ said I.

Here breakfast was brought in; and while we were eating it, she continued her pious exhortation; enumerated a great many snares I should be exposed to; and concluded with assuring me, that the welfare of my soul always employed her thoughts; and she hoped I should be prevailed upon to prefer my eternal happiness to the vain pleasures of sense.

I no sooner got leave to retire, but I hastened to find my friend the nun, who waited for me in my room. ‘I am in a maze, Madam,’ said I, as soon as I saw her; ‘I am so shocked at the ab-

‘bess’s impudence and hypocrisy, that I cannot tell how to express myself! What gross and palpable lies! My mother, my dear mother! she has the assurance to say, was very desirous of having me a nun.’—‘How! Mrs. De Valville! that is very extraordinary!’ returned my friend. ‘Nothing could be more so!’ replied I; ‘but she did not know that I was too well acquainted with that dear lady’s sentiments to give the least credit to such a vile assertion. I have a letter, too, to give to Mr. De Valville, which she pretends she sent the other day for Miss Varthon. This, I suppose, she expects I will break open: but she shall be deceived; I will send it to him just as it is, if ever I can get an opportunity of doing it.’—‘That is prudently resolved,’ returned my friend; ‘but will not you give me a more particular account of what she said to you?’ Here I repeated almost every word that passed between us; and when I had done, she told me she was very glad I insisted upon advising with Mrs. Dorfin: ‘But though,’ said she, ‘it is a very reasonable demand, I am persuaded she will not consent to it till she finds that all other means prove ineffectual. However, keep to your resolution.’

You will imagine, Madam, that I was now surrounded with a thousand fears, and was ready to sink into despair, at the dreadful apprehension of being confined from the man I loved; especially considering he might be imposed upon, and therefore, by false suggestions, might be induced to abandon me: but, if these are your thoughts, you are quite mistaken; for I never had a greater presence of mind than now. The abbess’s deceitful caresses, and impudent lies, so surprized me, that I had hardly leisure to attend to my affliction: I resolved, with my friend’s assistance, to counterplot her in all her artifices; and did not doubt but I should meet with success. ‘No wonder,’ said I, ‘that religion is so much despised; since it is made a pretence to cover the blackest designs, and the vilest purposes! What a heap of inconsistent nonsense has she invented to cover her avarice! Sanctified nonsense, and pious stupidity! The religion which comes from Heaven is certainly designed to “refine our mo-

"rals, and civilize the rudeness of nature;" to render the mind pleased with itself, and happy in the enjoyment of the sovereign good, the rectitude of an enlightened and enlarged understanding; to love what is truly lovely; and to hate what is base and detestable.—O my God!" cried I to myself, "help me to unravel her dark designs! Thou most perfect and amiable Being, while I can regard thee as my friend, I will never despair of thy protection!" To proceed.

After some farther conversation, in which the nun told me I had no reason to doubt a happy conclusion of this affair, since I had nothing to do but to arm myself with patience, she added—"You know I have promised to give you the history of my life; and I shall never, perhaps, find a better opportunity for doing it than I have now; besides, it will be some amusement to you, and make the time of your involuntary confinement pass away less heavily than it would otherwise do." I sincerely thanked her; told her it was extremely kind thus to contrive to make me forget my cares; and then desired her to proceed.

THE LIFE OF MISS DE TERVIERE.

"YOU have thought, my dear Marianne, that you have been the most unhappy person upon earth: this is a misfortune that we are too apt to create to ourselves; for the person that thinks herself miserable is indeed really so. Though you have not been blessed with tasting the sweets of a filial affection, you have still greater advantages; you have a most excellent character, a great deal of good sense, and a stock of virtue, that is of more value than all the benefits you could receive from the most indulgent parent; besides, a form so lovely, as to make you universally admired: these have now procured you advantages, which make the rest of your life happy. But, alas! there is no condition in life, however it may flatter us at a distance, which can secure us from misery, or which may not be the cause of our misfortunes; for every mortal is subject to a variety of terrible events.

"I am the daughter of a country gentleman of a very ancient and honourable family; though their constantly residing at their own castles, at a great distance from court, has rendered them very little known. Miss De Trele (for so was my mother called) was as nobly descended as my father: she had been educated in a convent, where she was a boarder; but being taken out to assist at the nuptials of one of her relations, my father happened to see her, and became perfectly enamoured. She, in her turn, felt a reciprocal tenderness for him; but her mother, who was a widow, thought herself obliged to oppose their mutual affection. She had a large family; and did not think my father (who was a rich heir) would ever be permitted to marry her youngest daughter; a lady who had scarcely any portion to bring him but her extraction: she told my father there was not the least reason to hope for it; and endeavoured to persuade him to suppress his passion, since it would probably come to nothing. But he opposed the difficulties she raised with so much spirit, that at last she consented he should see her daughter.

"Some time after this, my father mentioned it to Mr. De Terviere, and entreated him to give his consent to an union, on which, he said, depended the happiness of his life. But my grandfather, who had other views for him, laughed at his request; treated his passion as a frivolous amour; and proposed to carry him immediately to a young lady he had destined for him. My father, who thought that a step of this nature would be a kind of engagement, refused to go; on which, my grandfather answered very coolly, without any signs of resentment, that he would never force a marriage upon him; but could not consent to that he proposed, because his fortune would not be considerable enough to suffer him to burden himself with a woman who had none; and added, that if he married Miss De Trele, he should repent it. My father concealed this answer as long as possible from Mrs. De Trele; but she no sooner knew the old gentleman's resolution, than she ordered her daughter to see her lover no more, and prepared to send her back to the convent; when, distract-

ed

ed at the thought of losing her, he offered to marry her privately: the old lady took offence at this proposal, which only confirmed her in her resolution of concealing her daughter. But her two sons at this time returning from the army, learnt what was passing; and as they had a great esteem for my father, backed his solicitations so successfully, that Mrs. De Trele at last left them masters of their sister's fate; and my father married her about sixteen or seventeen months after this. Mr. De Terviere having several reasons which induced him to fear that my father had taken this false step, resolved to be satisfied, by addressing himself to him, to know if his suspicions were just: he, surprized at the question, and afraid to confess the truth, denied it; but in a manner that plainly discovered what he endeavoured to conceal. The old gentleman soon found out the truth; and while he was coolly threatening my father with a resentment that was afterwards attended with sad effects, my mother expected every day to bring me into the world. Thus, Marianne, you see my misfortunes were preparing for me before I saw the light.

Four months after this, when I was but three months and a few days old, my grandfather, whose indispositions gave him daily proofs of the decay of nature, in order to recreate himself, went on horseback, attended by two servants, to visit a gentleman who lived but about two leagues from his castle; but he had not got above half way, before he was seized with a swimming in his head, which he was very subject to. This obliged him to stop near the house of a peasant, whose wife was my nurse: he went in to sit down, when he saw the man endeavouring to make a pale and weakly child, that seemed almost dying, take some milk. Mr. De Terviere appeared touched with the child's condition; and asked for it's nurse—"For that," said he, "is all she wants."—"My wife," said the peasant, "is in bed sick of a fever, and therefore cannot suckle the child; my son went early this morning to desire the father and mother to come and bring a nurse with them; but nobody comes: the poor child is very ill; I endea-

vour to keep her alive as well as I can; but if she is suffered to languish in this manner, it will be impossible to save her."—"I am very much concerned for the little creature," returned Mr. De Terviere—"You would be much more so, Sir," cried the poor woman from her bed, "did you know who she is."—"How! who is she, then?" cried he, with some surprize. "Alas, Sir!" replied the peasant, "I was afraid of telling you at first, for fear of offending you; for I am sensible that your son married without your consent: it is Mr. De Terviere's." The old gentleman was here a moment without making any answer; and then, looking at me with a pensive and tender air—"Poor child!" said he, "thou hast never offended me: make haste," added he, turning to one of the servants, "and fly to my house; I remember my gardener's wife lost a boy she suckled a day or two ago; and tell her I desire her to come immediately to take the child, and I will pay her. Desire her to make as much haste as possible."

He being now pretty well recovered, kissed me, and mounted his horse; but he had not been gone above a hundred yards from the house, before his son arrived with a nurse, which he could not find sooner. The peasant, in a few words, told him what had just passed: he was touched with the goodness and tenderness of his offended father; took horse again, and rode full speed after him, to express the grateful sense he had of his kindness.

Mr. De Terviere, who saw him at a distance, stopped, and waited for his coming up to him; when he alighted, ran to him, and threw himself on his knees, with tears in his eyes, unable to utter a word. "I know, my son, what brings you hither," said he, moved at my father's behaviour: "your daughter wants some assistance, and I have sent to procure it for her; if it arrives soon enough to be of any service, I shall not leave imperfect the kindness I would do her; for it would be barbarous to preserve a life only to render it miserable. Go, my son, your daughter from henceforward shall be mine; let her be carried to my house, and take your wife
thither

"thither too; she shall have the apartment which was your mother's, where I shall expect to find you both when I return at night. If Mrs. De Trele will do me the favour to sup with me, I shall be very glad of her company. I long to be back again to alter my will; which is not now very favourable to you. Farewel; I shall be at home very early: mean while go back to your daughter, and take care of her."

"My father, who continued on his knees, was still too much softened, and too full of joy, to make him any answer, but by bathing his hand, which he stooped down to give him, with his tears. The old gentleman desired him to arise, then rode away; when my father returned to me, whom he found in the nurse's arms whom he had brought with him; he conducted us both to his father's castle; gave me to the gardener's wife; and then set out to inform his wife and mother-in-law with this agreeable, and, as he thought, happy event; and brought them both to his father's. Impatient to see the old gentleman, he rode out in the evening to meet him, when he met a servant who was sent to let him know that Mr. De Terviere was suddenly fallen into a fainting-fit, and continued speechless; and who, in short, expired before he could see him. What a dreadful blow was this to my father and mother! What a sad change did it make in my fortune! He had made a will which was found amongst his papers, in which he left his whole estate to his other son, and reduced my father to a small pension, which the law obliged him to allow him. He had nothing to hope for from his brother, who was one of those sordid spirits who are incapable of doing a generous action; one of those little souls, who will never do any good, but what the law obliges them to; who reckon it their duty not to leave you any thing when they may safely strip you of all; and who, if they see you do a beneficent action, regard you with an eye that expresses how much they applaud themselves for not being capable of such a weakness; and will plainly tell you—"I had rather you should do it than I."

"Such was the man my father had to

deal with, so that he had no hopes of assistance from him; but was constrained to be satisfied with his pension, which was very inconsiderable; and with what little my mother brought him in marriage. But my father did not live long. A young gentleman of his own age, who was going to Paris to join his regiment, took him with him, and gave him a commission. And here ends both his history and his life, which he lost in the first campaign.

"My mother was esteemed one of the greatest beauties of the province; and was so perfectly amiable, that notwithstanding her having but a small fortune, and being burdened with a child, she had several offers of marrying again much to her advantage. But my father was then too dear to her; she preserved a too tender regard to his memory to be able to resolve to live another's. However, a man of quality, who had a considerable estate in our neighbourhood, coming to spend some time there, saw my mother, and loved her. This nobleman insinuated himself into her esteem by amusing her vanity, and insensibly made her forget her first husband. In short, he offered her his hand; and they were married when I was but a year and a half old.

"Here my mother's situation in life was entirely changed: from very low circumstances, she was raised to be one of the greatest ladies in the kingdom. But three weeks after their marriage, I had no mother: the honours and luxury which surrounded her robbed her of her tenderness for me, and left me no place in her heart; and that little child that was before so dear to her, that she used to say put her in mind of my father, whom I resembled; that infant which softened the idea of his death, and sometimes seemed to present him before her eyes, and made her almost fancy he was still alive; was almost as much forgotten as he himself, and was little better than an orphan.

"As my mother became with child, her attention was entirely diverted from me: she left me to the care of the housekeeper; and was so indifferent, that she did not enquire how I did, nor see me sometimes for a fortnight together. Mrs. De Trele, who

who lived but three leagues off, could not suspect that I, who had been the delight and comfort of her daughter, should be so entirely abandoned by her. She loved me with all the tenderness of a grandmother; and, therefore, as she came one day to dine with the Marquis De ***, her son-in-law, she was surprized to see me sitting on the ground at play, at the gate of the court, in a most wretched disorder: my cap was tore; my hair hung about my ears; and all my cloaths were in rags. She hardly knew me at first; though my complexion was not altered, and I appeared with a countenance gay and healthful: she asked the housekeeper's servant, who stood just by with one of her mistress's children, if I was Miss De Terviere. She answered that I was. "What! this my child! this the condition she is in!" cried she, with an air of tender indignation, at seeing me so shamefully neglected. "Pray, take the child in your arms," added she, "and follow me into the castle." The servant was forced to obey her, and carried me to my mother's apartment; where her woman was dressing her head. "Daughter," said Mrs. De Trele, as she entered the room, "they would persuade me to believe that this is Miss De Terviere: sure, it cannot be! Why, nobody would pick up her cloaths! To be sure, it is some miserable orphan that your housekeeper has taken in out of charity! Is it not?" My mother blushed: for this manner of reproaching her for her conduct towards me had something in it very severe; and she could not hear herself so smartly reprov'd for her barbarity to me without being quite out of temper. "I have been indisposed these three days," returned she; "and have not been able to see what passed.—Get you gone; and tell my impertinent housekeeper, that I desire she would come to me by-and-by," added she to the girl, in a tone which shewed she was more angry at me than with her whom she called impertinent. Mrs. De Trele, who was touched with the condition in which she found me, was no sooner alone with her, than she burst into tears; and let her see,

without the least disguise, how great was her compassion for me at seeing me treated thus.

The old lady was one of those mothers who have no other pleasure, no other employment, than what springs from discharging the duties of their families; and who know no other satisfaction than in carefully fulfilling them: judge, then, if, with these dispositions, she could be at all satisfied with my mother.

I do not know what she said to her, but it was possibly more than was agreeable to her daughter; for reproofs and harsh words never are of any service to us: our faults vanish from our minds the moment we are offended. And every one might see that she had injured me, by confirming my mother in her dislike to me.

Three weeks after this, the marquis, who designed to carry his wife to Paris to lie-in there, received news which hastened his journey: and as my mother had not time, in her hurry, to settle her affairs, she took only one of her women with her, and left orders for me to follow her in a coach three days after, with the rest of her servants. As they had promised to send me, the evening before our departure, to Mrs. De Trele's, she was disturbed to find I did not come; and therefore came to the castle, to know what it was that hindered them from keeping their word. The housekeeper told her that my mother had left me to her care, with orders not to risque my life, by letting me go such a journey, if I should happen to be indisposed; and that as I was actually ill in bed of a violent cold, they, in conformity to her lady's desire, were gone without me. "What! has she left her to you?" cried Mrs. De Trele, turning her back upon her; and then ordered me to be brought down, and to go with her directly to her house; where I arrived perfectly cured of my cold, which my mother had contrived, to prevent her being troubled with my company. On this, Mrs. De Trele wrote to her in the severest and most moving terms. I have seen a copy of this letter; and, to let you see how sincerely affected she was at my mother's treatment of me, I will

“ will repeat part of it to you: it was
“ in substance as follows—

“ **YOU** have loved Mr. De Ter-
“ viere; you have lamented his
“ loss; and yet you injure his memory
“ by using ill the only pledge of his
“ love: he left you but one child; and
“ yet you refuse to be a mother to her;
“ and now you force me, through my
“ tenderness, to take care of her; and
“ when I am gone, I suppose you will
“ abandon her to the charity of
“ others.”

“ My mother, who was pleased that
“ she had gained her point, patiently
“ endured these reproaches, and satis-
“ fied herself with denying that she
“ had any thoughts of keeping me
“ from her: she sent me some linen and
“ silk for my cloaths; and assured Mrs.
“ De Trele that she would send for me
“ to Paris as soon as she was brought
“ to-bed. But this was only to gain
“ time; she continually evaded putting
“ her promise in execution; and made
“ use of many pretexts, as excuses for
“ her not sending for me: but it was
“ happy for me that, as my mother’s
“ heart froze, and lost every sentiment
“ of maternal tenderness, the old lady’s
“ grew more warm and affectionate.
“ She now began to write but very sel-
“ dom; and when she did, hardly ever
“ mentioned me: so that, in two years
“ and a half’s time, she seemed to have
“ perfectly forgot that there was such
“ a person in the world. Thus I was
“ dear only to Mrs. De Trele; indiffe-
“ rent to the relations I had in that
“ country; unknown to those in the
“ other provinces; troublesome to my
“ two aunts, my mother’s sisters, who
“ hated me on account of her regard
“ to me: I had no other prospect before
“ me than that of her friendship, which
“ must necessarily be but of a very
“ short duration. In this manner did
“ I pass my infancy, till I was twelve
“ years old; during which time my
“ aunts, whom I have mentioned, mar-
“ ried persons of the same dispositions
“ with themselves; but at last, Mrs.
“ De Trele, who was pretty old, fell
“ sick; her condition cured me of my
“ levity; and gave me a habit of think-
“ ing, which made me sensible of my
“ own wretched state. The servants,
“ seeing her past recovery, shamefully

“ neglected her; and my aunts, who
“ came to see her, treated me with the
“ utmost indifference and disrespect.
“ The good old lady perceived it with
“ a visible concern; she reproached
“ them with their unkindness to me,
“ in the most tender manner, with a
“ mildness very different from her
“ usual way of speaking to them on
“ such occasions; as if she endeavoured
“ to beg their mercy for me. This I
“ could not help taking notice of, and
“ drawing a presage of some frightful
“ impending evil; and though I was
“ too young to reason distinctly upon
“ it, yet I was seized with a terror
“ which rendered me mute, humble,
“ and fearful. Besides, Mrs. De
“ Trele’s whole behaviour, when her
“ daughters were absent, contributed
“ to open my eyes. She called me to
“ her, took hold of my hand, and
“ spoke to me with such tenderness, as
“ if she meant to comfort me, dissi-
“ pate my alarms, and raise me from
“ that humiliation of soul into which
“ she saw I was fallen.

“ One day, a lady of the neighbour-
“ hood, who was her intimate friend,
“ came to see her; and she desired to
“ speak with her in private: when I
“ stepped into a little closet in the room;
“ and, out of a tender and uneasy cu-
“ riosity, resolved to listen to their con-
“ versation. “ I am very much con-
“ cerned for this dear little child,”
“ said Mrs. De Trele: “ it is only
“ upon her account I desire to live.”
“ But God is the supreme disposer of
“ all things; he is in a peculiar man-
“ ner the father of the orphan. Have
“ you been so kind,” added she, “ to
“ speak to Mr. Villot?” (This was a
“ rich inhabitant of a neighbouring
“ borough, who for above thirty years
“ had farmed Mr. De Terviere’s, my
“ grandfather’s estate; and had gained
“ the greatest part of his fortune in his
“ family.) “ Yes,” said her friend,
“ I have been with him this morning:
“ he says he will conform himself to
“ your desire; and will come to assure
“ you of it himself. So, pray, make
“ yourself easy; Miss De Terviere is
“ not so much an orphan as you may
“ imagine: pray, Madam, think bet-
“ ter of her mother; it is true, she
“ neglects her now, but she must in-
“ fallibly love the little, charming
“ creature, as soon as she sees her.”

“ Though

Though they spoke very low, I heard every thing they said: the term "orphan," at first surprized me extremely, as I knew I had a mother; but Mrs. De Trele's friend made me sensible of her meaning, by letting me know that my mother did not love me. I had not yet been fully acquainted with her indifference; and I could not now think of it without bursting into tears, and being filled with the greatest consternation.

A few days after this, Mrs. De Trele was so ill, that her daughters were sent for; but she died before they came. They staid four or five days in the house, in order to pay their last duties to their mother, and set every thing in order in the absence of their brothers; one of whom was at Paris, and the other in the army. There were a thousand debates between the two sisters, who sometimes quarrelled, and sometimes united, against a man to whom their eldest brother, who had been informed of his mother's illness, had sent a letter of attorney from Paris. These clamours made the house continually in an indecent uproar; for an insatiable avarice, and a greedy thirst of plunder, deprived them of every degree of tenderness for each other; and even left no room in their hearts for any concern for their mother's death: but, when they found Mrs. De Trele had left me a diamond-ring worth two thousand livres, they lost all patience; could not bear to see me; and even reflected upon their mother in a very severe and injurious manner. I had shut myself up in a little room, where they had ordered me to go, because my cries and lamentations were troublesome to them: here I indulged my affliction, till the excess of my grief rendered me silent. Every thing about me had a solitary and melancholy gloom: I was looked upon as nobody; every face seemed unfriendly; or, at least, looked with indifference upon me; and all of them appeared more strange than if I had never known them. I staid in this place as in a kind of sanctuary from the rough usage of my aunts; in which I was detained through the terror of being obliged to appear be-

fore them; and where I even trembled every time I heard the sound of their voices. Can you believe me, Marianne, when I tell you, that I cannot even now think of this dreadful situation without feeling a sensible terror? I had ever before been entirely unacquainted with this strange kind of misery; my heart had been softened by my grandmother's tenderness; so that I had never before felt what it was to have the least trouble of mind: but I had now a sadness lurking in the very bottom of my soul, which preyed upon my heart, and sunk me into the most cruel despair. We are only frightened at the thought of belonging to nobody; but sink into nothing in the presence of relations like these.

At last, my situation began to change; my aunts had nothing more to dispute about; and therefore prepared to go home with their husbands, who were come for them: when they appointed an old servant of Mrs. De Trele's, a vine-dresser, who lodged in a little house in her court, to be housekeeper till the seals could be taken off. He came to fetch me from the little room where I had hid myself, and desired me to follow him into the hall, where they were all at breakfast: I did so with the utmost reluctance; my eyes were cast down; I trembled, turned pale, and durst not look at the two dreadful sisters. They then debated what should be done with me; and, as both refused to keep me, it was concluded, at last, that I should stay with the poor vine dresser: but they had no sooner agreed how to dispose of me, than Mr. Villot, whom Mrs. De Trele had wrote to just before she died, entered the hall. I was transported at seeing him; and entreated him to carry me to his house: he told me he came for that purpose; and, with the two ladies consent, would take me away immediately. My aunts readily complied; my box was brought down, and committed to the care of a peasant, who was to carry it for us: when one of my aunts told me she would write to my mother; bid me be a good girl; and then both stepped into their chaise, and drove away

‘ without kissing me. We se out soon after, and presently arrived at Mr. Villot’s; whose wife received me with an air of gaiety, and a countenance so affable, that she presently became familiar to me. As my aunts had imposed silence on my grief, I here found the satisfaction of crying as much as I pleased; a circumstance that was accompanied with a peculiar kind of satisfaction.’

Some of the nuns entering at this part of the story, obliged Miss De Terviere to break off: I shall therefore, Madam, do so too; and defer the sequel of her history, which contains scenes so extremely affecting, that they must melt the most obdurate heart, to the next Part; in which I shall fully atone for the shortness of this.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.